

**CLASSROOM TALK:
A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses aspects of teaching as a speech event, using naturalistic data collected by participant observation and audio-recording in classroom settings. It uses sociolinguistic concepts to analyse teachers' talk; and uses the classroom as a focus for developing sociolinguistic theory on conversational data collected in a well-defined social setting. The work is explicitly interdisciplinary, integrating concepts from different academic fields. Chapter 1 introduces these themes; and discusses reasons for doing the study: educational research has neglected classroom observation, and sociolinguistics lacks well focussed field studies and descriptions of actual language use.

Chapter 2 reviews and develops concepts which have been proposed to explain social interaction. It concentrates on the concepts of: the "monitoring" of behaviour, "accounts" of social action, "communicative competence", "speech event" and "speech functions"; and on important work by Harré and Secord, Hymes and Labov. A large body of other research is referred to as appropriate. Teaching can be regarded as a social episode (Harré and Secord) or speech event (Hymes) in which the teacher closely monitors the conversational situation: by continually performing such speech acts as explaining, summarising, eliciting answers, prompting and correcting. The concept of "metacommunication" is proposed to describe such speech acts which serve to exert control over classroom talk: over topics discussed, over who speaks when, over pupils' understanding, etc.

Chapter 3 reviews studies of classroom language by Barnes, Bellack, Flanders, Mishler, Sinclair and others, and compares them to the approach argued in the present study.

There are no widely accepted methods of data-collection and

analysis in research on social interaction. Chapter 4 therefore discusses research techniques and associated theory. Labov's contributions to sociolinguistic methodology are summarised, and developed with reference to the concepts of "theoretical sampling" (Glaser and Strauss) and "triangulation" (Webb, Cicourel). The data used in the present study (audio-recordings, field notes, recorded interviews) are discussed with reference to these concepts, to consider problems of methodology including: how much data is required in sociolinguistic research; how data can best be selected; and problems due to the misleading familiarity of data on social interaction.

Chapters 1 to 4 therefore propose concepts now further developed on observational and audio-recorded data collected in the classroom.

Chapter 5 is an initial discursive analysis of audio-recorded teacher-pupil talk. It argues that speech functions are an appropriate level at which to characterise classroom interaction, since teachers and pupils have vastly different conversational rights in the classroom: their talk serves different functions. The chapter then discusses quoted field notes and transcripts, to illustrate problems in analysing talk in its social context; but also to show that the type of concepts proposed can usefully be applied to such data.

Chapter 6 develops this discursive analysis into a coding scheme and associated model which specify a range of meta-communicative functions which teachers' talk characteristically serves. It then illustrates various uses of this more systematic description: by isolating characteristic "linguistic routines" (Hymes) by which teachers elicit answers from pupils; and by comparing classroom talk with other types of language use.

A weakness of much educational research into classroom talk has been the failure to relate the description to more general theory of social interaction. Chapter 7 first shows how features of classroom talk fit into a wide pattern of cultural sociolinguistic norms. It then discusses how the coding scheme can investigate the general function of teachers' talk to organise the transmission of educational knowledge, and hence also some of the pervasive underlying values it conveys: its "hidden curriculum" (Snyder). This illustrates how general theories of teaching are embodied in the coding scheme, and thus indicates how the type of analysis proposed can lead to a definition of teaching which is powerful because grounded in the discourse structure of teachers' own classroom talk.

Chapter 8 discusses problems with the type of coding proposed, which fails to come to grips with crucial aspects of how people understand each other. An alternative way of describing talk is to use the concept of interpretive rules (Labov). Various rules are formulated to specify ways in which metacomments are understood in talk. Such rules can further explicate values and attitudes which underlie classroom language.

Research on social behaviour has often ignored, or derided as haphazard, people's own cultural interpretations of their behaviour. Chapter 9 analyses pupils' and teachers' own accounts of classroom language, to show in what ways they are structured. Children and adults were asked to talk about audio-recordings of conversation. These accounts are analysed in terms of the way people describe and explain social behaviour: the social knowledge on which such accounts draw, and their underlying logic. These "lay" accounts are then compared with researchers' accounts of teacher-pupil talk, again to throw light on the status of sociolinguistic descriptions.

Chapters 5 to 9 therefore comprise different and complementary analyses of classroom talk. The aim of thus presenting different forms of analysis is to discuss at each stage the status of the descriptive theory itself.

Chapter 10 summarises the study in terms of its attempt both to integrate work on social interaction from different areas, and also to present findings and descriptive sociolinguistic theory on classroom talk. It then discusses educational implications of the study for teacher-training and for teaching sociolinguistics in schools. Finally, it makes explicit some of the "imaginative background" to the study, arguing that there are interesting unexplored connections between "social science" and "literature". This section discusses again, this time at a very general level, questions of the status and legitimacy of different types of description and explanation in the social sciences.

The study aims then to develop and integrate theory of language in use along a relatively broad front, drawing ideas from different academic disciplines; as well as to relate these ideas to naturalistic data, and thus to analyse aspects of how people actually talk to each other in a specific social situation: the classroom.

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The final form of the study represents my own work and responsibility.

NOTE ON RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Part of the work reported in this thesis, or work closely related to it, is published as follows:

- 1972* "Keeping in touch: some functions of teacher-talk", Occasional Paper 10, Centre for Research in the Educational Sciences, University of Edinburgh. (Revised version to appear in Stubbs & Delamont, eds., in press.)
- 1974** "Review of C.Cazden, V.John & D.Hymes, eds., Functions of Language in the Classroom", Language In Society, 3, 1, April 1974.
- in press "Organising classroom talk", Occasional Paper 19, Centre for Research in the Educational Sciences, University of Edinburgh. (Revised version of invited paper read to British Sociological Association Social Psychology Group Conference on Ethnomethodology, University of Manchester, January 1973.)
- in press "Organising talk in the classroom", invited paper to appear in German translation in Thema Curriculum, special edition on Communication in the Classroom.

A publication closely related to this thesis in its general approach to classroom research is:

Michael Stubbs & Sara Delamont (eds.) Explorations in Classroom Observation, John Wiley, in press.

* In Appendix C.

** In Appendix D.

NOTE TO THE READER

This is an explicitly "interdisciplinary" study which draws on and develops both sociolinguistic and educational research methods.

A difficulty in presenting material to two audiences within different academic disciplines is that what is of central interest to one reader may be of peripheral interest to another. I have tried to let the problem under study - how to describe how teachers talk to their pupils - determine what is essential to discuss at length, whilst also trying to indicate other approaches and related topics: hence the large number of footnotes (for which I apologise in advance), which indicate directions in which the work might be developed, or which direct the reader to fuller discussions of topics which I have no room to develop in the present study.

It has been difficult to present the material for another reason. Quite simply, there are as yet few accepted conventions and procedures for presenting and analysing data on conversation and on social interaction.

I discuss these issues in the body of the study at points where they become immediately relevant. I mention them briefly now, as several people who have read drafts of this study have commented that its style does not conform entirely to the style expected of a thesis. I suggest that this is because its subject-matter does not fall neatly into a pre-defined type of study.

I raise these points also however as it is appropriate that a sociolinguistic study of language in use should be conscious of ways in which it is inevitably subject to the very constraints, and inevitably expresses the very values, which are its topic of study.

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"Studying language in the classroom is not really 'applied' linguistics; it is really basic research."

Hymes 1972:xviii. (Emphasis in original.)

"Quantitative research implies that one knows what to count, and this knowledge is reached only through a long period of trial and approximation, and upon the basis of a solid body of theoretical constructs. By the time the analyst knows what to count, the problem is practically solved. ... When we can say what is being done with a sentence, then we will be able to observe how often speakers do it."

Labov 1970a.

"I had a teacher, he used to say, 'There's only one rule in my classroom - no skylarking.'."

Schoolboy, aged 16.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:

"SOCIOLINGUISTICS" AND "INTERDISCIPLINARY" CLASSROOM RESEARCH

This study develops a sociolinguistic description of some of the ways in which teachers talk to their pupils in the classroom. It is concerned centrally with analysing aspects of audio-recorded and observational data on naturally occurring teaching situations: that is, situations which were not set up by the researcher, whether as experiments, interviews or tests. The nature of what teachers and pupils actually say to each other will be central, and other data will be used only to illuminate this topic.

More specifically, this study analyses audio-recordings of classroom talk, in order to study ways in which teachers, in traditionally formal lessons, exert tight control over the development of classroom talk. These primary audio-recorded data are discussed also in relation to what pupils themselves have to say about teachers' talk. A central topic throughout the study will be not only: how do teachers talk to their pupils?; but also: what is the status of the various descriptions of teacher-talk which I propose?

In this introductory chapter, I will discuss, in an informal way, some reasons for doing such a study; and, equally informally, introduce several themes to be developed later in detail: namely, what I mean by "sociolinguistics", the "interdisciplinary" nature of the study, and the general lack of widely accepted methods and theory in the field of social interaction. A longish introductory chapter

covering these topics is necessary in order to set the context for research which does not slot neatly into a traditional style of study, but borrows liberally from methods and concepts of both sociolinguistic and educational research.

1.1. SOME REASONS FOR THE STUDY

A sociolinguistic analysis of teaching behaviour observed and recorded in the classroom begins to fill several gaps left by previous research.

First, relatively little educational research, paradoxical as this may seem, has been based on direct observation or recording of the teaching process, as it happens, in the classroom itself. Most research has sought to explain the educational process by looking at supposed determinants of educational success or failure (e.g. social class or I.Q.) and outcomes (e.g. as measured on tests or questionnaires), but without looking at the classroom situation directly. On common-sense grounds alone, it would seem that an understanding of teaching and learning would have to depend, at least in part, on observation of teachers and learners. There are many reasons for this paradoxical gap in educational research, which will not however concern me further here. Criticisms of "psychometric" style research, based on testing and questionnaire methods, have been fully set out by Hudson (1966, 1968), Parlett (1969a, 1970), Parlett and Hamilton (1972), and others.

Second, most research which has been based on direct observation of teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom, has been done exclusively according to techniques of "systematic observation". In using techniques of this type, an observer sits in the classroom and uses a

set of pre-prepared categories to "code" what teachers and pupils say, usually every few seconds on a time-sampling principle. Literally hundreds of studies have been done with such systems; (there are seventy-nine published coding schemes summarised in Simon & Boyer 1967, 1970). But results for research have been disappointing, and no clear trends have emerged, for example, between teachers' verbal styles, as defined by the coding schemes, and measures of "teaching effectiveness". This type of work is covered by several comprehensive reviews (such as Gage 1963, Withall & Lewis 1963, Medley & Mitzel 1963). Later reviews and criticisms of the approach have now thoroughly documented reasons for disillusionment with the technique as a research tool, although not necessarily as a teacher-training method (Nuthall 1968, Gallagher 1970, Adelman & Walker 1974, Delamont & Hamilton forthcoming). (For further references see 3.2.) Also, given that relatively little analysis has been based on direct observation of classroom behaviour, it seems premature to remain committed to only one narrowly defined type of observation.¹ In chapter 7 I discuss in detail some of the assumptions behind one such observation system.

A third reason, then, for the type of study I have proposed is that almost no research based on direct observation of teaching has experimented with a wider range of ways of describing and analysing social interaction in the classroom.² However, an increasing amount of "anthropological" style research is now being done in schools, and

¹ Hamilton & Delamont 1974 argue this in detail.

² One of the few collections of papers which does explore and argue for a range of different methods of classroom observation is Stubbs & Delamont, eds., forthcoming.

in institutions of higher education. Such work itself covers a wide range of styles - as befits its often explicitly innovatory and exploratory aims. In general, it is based on long-term or intensive field work, that is, on some form of participant observation. The researcher may spend several months actually in the classroom, observing, taking notes, recording, and talking to teachers and pupils, the aim being to produce a report resembling an ethnographic description of the social setting. The end product may lie on a continuum between an evaluation of some educational setting, and a purely research oriented analysis of teaching processes. Such research typically aims to understand and describe the social interaction which comprises the teaching situation, but it is not generally concerned to analyse specifically sociolinguistic behaviour. (General arguments in favour of this style of research are Parlett 1969a, 1969b, 1970, and Parlett & Hamilton 1972. Specific studies of school classroom situations in this style are Adams & Biddle 1970, Delamont 1973, Hamilton 1973, Henry 1963, Nash 1973, Jackson 1968, Smith & Geoffrey 1967, Torode 1972, Walker & Adelman 1972.³ Walker 1971, 1972 reviews observational research on the classroom as a social setting.)

³ Note that the British studies listed are recently completed or still on-going PhD projects or unpublished reports. Most of the formally published work in this area is American. Hamilton (1972, also unpublished) discusses the recent genesis of classroom research as a legitimate field of research. Cf my comments on "legitimacy" in 1.5. Torode 1972 is concerned specifically with language. Walker & Adelman 1972 is concerned with certain sociolinguistic concepts, widely defined, and also with types of nonverbal communication in the classroom. Torode 1972 is an ethnomethodological study, but based nevertheless on long-term participant observation with a secondary school class. Nash 1973 still uses many quasi-psychometric style tests, but again is based also on long-term observational research.

So, fourth there are almost no observational studies of classroom life which use sociolinguistic concepts to analyse teacher-pupil talk. Labov (1970b) discusses this gap in research and gives some pointers to researchers. Only a few studies of verbal interaction in the classroom, as I have said, use any concepts apart from predetermined category systems. The only British study to use explicitly sociolinguistic concepts to systematically analyse tape-recorded teacher-pupil conversations is Sinclair et al 1972. In chapter 3 (and in Stubbs forthcoming, in Appendix D), I discuss the few studies which do look directly at classroom talk from a sociolinguistic angle.

Fifth, almost no sociolinguistic research has analysed conversational data recorded in its social context, in the course of well-focussed field studies. Work by Hymes and others on the "ethnography of speaking" (discussed in detail in chapter 2), whilst urging the study of speech situations and speech events, has been almost exclusively at the level of general cultural patterns and norms of speech behaviour. Only very recently has there been any significant amount of sociolinguistic analysis of speech events recorded in their social setting (e.g. Labov 1972a). Teaching situations therefore provide a focus for recording data on which to develop sociolinguistic theory. I will take up these last two points in detail below.

The present study aims then to help to fill a gap in educational research by applying sociolinguistic concepts to an analysis of speech recorded in the classroom; and to help to fill a gap in sociolinguistic research by developing sociolinguistic concepts on spontaneous conversational data gathered in a well-defined social setting.

1.2. "SOCIOLINGUISTIC" RESEARCH

It would be useful at this stage to give a brief characterisation of what I mean by "sociolinguistic" research - first, because the report of this study is intended partly for an educational audience; but second, because the term has many different senses for linguists.⁴ This initial characterisation of what is now a broad field will also specify various general points about language in use which I will want then to take for granted in the rest of the study.

Sociolinguistics covers a wide range of studies of how language is used in its social contexts, including: dialect surveys; language-planning for developing nations; ethnographies of communication; situations of bi- and multi-lingualism; creoles, pidgins and lingua francas; the speech of different social groups; face-to-face interaction, and so on. But all these studies have one thing in common: they deal with language variation. They emphasise how malleable language is, and how its form and function change across different cultures and across different social situations within one culture. This emphasis on heterogeneity is one major concern which distinguishes sociolinguistics from much traditional theoretical linguistics, which, with legitimate alternative aims, idealises its object of study to the extent of assuming language to be homogeneous and monolithic. (Labov 1970a and Hymes 1962, 1964b are the almost classic critiques, from the point of view of sociolinguistics, of this definition of theoretical linguistics.) The aim of sociolinguistics

⁴ Standard overviews of what sociolinguistics is, which might be of interest to an educational reader, include: Fishman 1964, 1971, Grimshaw 1966, Pride 1970, 1971a.

is, of course, to find systematic patterning within the variation.

In this study, I use the term "sociolinguistic" to refer specifically to the study of spoken interaction in face-to-face encounters. Various social factors determine the individual's use of language in face-to-face social situations. Everyone is multidialectal or multi-stylistic, in the sense that he adapts his style of speaking to suit the social situation in which he finds himself. Such style-shifting demands constant judgements. Yet speakers are not normally aware of making such judgements until they find themselves in a problematic situation for which they do not know the conventions, or for which the criteria for speaking in a certain way clash. On the other hand, it is intuitively obvious that a teacher, for example, does not speak in the same way to his wife, his mother-in-law, his colleagues in the staff room, his headmaster, or his pupils. His way of speaking to his pupils will also change according to the matter in hand: teaching an academic subject, organising the school concert, or handing out punishments. People therefore adapt their speech according to the person they are talking to, and the point behind the talk. These are social, rather than purely linguistic constraints.

□ As further examples of what I have in mind by talking about language variation, consider the following rather mixed bag of styles or varieties⁵ of spoken and written English: BBC English, Black English,

⁵ Distinctions which some linguists have tried to draw between "styles", "varieties", "codes", "registers" and "dialects" are not relevant to my argument here. Denison (1971) argues convincingly that all such varieties of style-shifting can be usefully treated in the same conceptual framework, and alongside code-switching between different languages. Weinreich (1953:1) argues the same point. Gumperz & Hernandez-Chavez (1972) argue the same point with reference to social meanings conveyed by Spanish-English code-switching among Mexican-Americans.

Brooklynese, Cockney, journalese, lecturing, church sermon, talking shop, talking lah-de-dah, talking down to someone, giving someone the lowdown, giving someone a dressing down, getting something off one's chest, small talk, hippie talk, men's talk, women's talk, a heart-to-heart talk, whispering sweet nothings These styles vary along several dimensions, notably geographical, social class, and functional. But their description involves questions of the same order: namely, who says what to whom? where? why? when? and how? In addition, more than one dimension is typically involved in any one of the styles mentioned. For example, BBC English has not only geographical and social class implications, but also shows functional specialisation, by which I mean that one would probably not want to label as "BBC English" the style which the BBC announcer uses with his family over breakfast.

Some of the categories I have listed as language varieties might be thought of as speech situations, rather than as styles or varieties. But speech and social situation are not really separable in this way. It is not simply the case that certain social situations demand, or make it appropriate, that one whisper sweet nothings. By whispering sweet nothings, the speaker may build up specific expectations in his audience, and thereby create a specific social situation! Speech is therefore not something that merely happens in situations - a sort of epiphenomenon. It is part of situations. To say therefore, as I said above, that certain situations determine certain kinds of language-use, is to oversimplify. It is, rather, a two-way process. I will show below how the characteristic language of teachers creates, and is created by, a specific social situation in the classroom.

Native speakers therefore command a great deal of judgemental skill at variety shifting to suit the occasion. Linguists have recently paid a lot of attention to the competence which native speakers of a language possess to distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sentences. This has of course been a primary focus of Chomskyan linguistics. (In chapter 2, I discuss some of the criticisms of this relatively narrow concept of linguistic competence, from a sociolinguistic point of view.) But a native speaker has internalised a great deal of other knowledge about his language, including: whether language he hears is appropriate to the situation in which it is uttered; and how to use his knowledge about social relationships in interpreting what other speakers say. These kinds of knowledge have, until recently, been almost entirely unexplored.⁶ In this study I am particularly concerned with these two aspects of communicative competence in the context of the classroom.

1.3. THE LACK OF PRECEDENTS IN SOCIAL INTERACTION STUDIES

This study suggests, then, both how certain (primarily sociolinguistic) concepts can begin to provide a descriptive language for discussing what teachers do when they talk to their pupils, and also how teaching situations can provide a useful focus for developing sociolinguistic methods and theory. The approach will therefore begin to

⁶ The categories of social knowledge which speakers draw upon in the routine interpretation of conversation is now one central topic of the type of conversational analysis which is based on an ethnomethodological approach. I discuss this topic more fully below in 3.9, 8.4ff, and chapter 9. For the present see Sacks 1972a, Gumperz & Herasimchuk 1973.

show one way in which teaching can be studied within a general framework of social interaction theory, and will therefore seek to avoid a weakness of many studies of verbal interaction in the classroom: the kind of description given of teacher-pupil talk has often been context-bound and inapplicable to other varieties of language-use or other social situations. (See especially 7.2 below.)

Communicative behaviour in the classroom is complex, and data on it are notoriously hard to handle. On the other hand, as compared with other less formal speech events, teaching situations provide a less daunting prospect, since teaching is highly structured in some fairly obvious ways: essentially in so far as the teacher is routinely in strict verbal control of the speech situation. I will try to show that certain techniques and concepts (both of data-collection and analysis) can however begin to deal with this complexity.

At the most general level, I discuss certain problems connected with setting up a description of teaching as a speech event, taking teaching situations as one example of a set of social scenes in which people talk to each other, including, for example, conversations, discussions, debates, seminars, interviews, arguments, lovers' tiffs, tête-à-têtes, committees and negotiations.⁷ My concern is therefore with ways of describing the social (speech) behaviour expected as appropriate from the speakers, in this case teachers and pupils, and with ways in which the speech event is organised, ordered, coherent, and systematic, and therefore ultimately with ways in which the

⁷ In more recent work, partially reported in Stubbs 1973 in Appendix E, I study committee meetings and negotiations recorded in industrial settings, from a point of view which I regard as essentially a development of that adopted in the present study.

discourse is understandable, interpretable, and in specific ways predictable.

The study deals therefore with aspects of several "classic" sociolinguistic problems in the ethnography of speaking⁸, and in conversational analysis⁹ as well as having concerns in common with primarily educational studies of language in the classroom¹⁰, and with more general studies of classroom life.¹¹

But although such problems are now accepted as "classic", no single approach is widely accepted in such studies of spoken interaction. Different ways have been proposed of doing fieldwork, collecting, analysing and presenting data. (Chapter 4 is fully devoted to such aspects of sociolinguistic methodology.) Different researchers may accept different kinds of evidence (e.g. experimental, unstructured observational, tape-recorded, coded, questionnaire, etc.) as either relevant or inadequate, depending on their theoretical biases, and often with no discussion of what type of evidence would be appropriate for different problems. In chapter 2, I discuss the notion that different concepts of rigour are possible and appropriate in different circumstances.

Much of the literature on social interaction is unhelpful in practical matters of analysis and presentation of data for another reason. Quite simply, the majority of papers on the ethnography of

⁸ I.e. work by Hymes, Gumperz, Albert, Ervin-Tripp and others as discussed in 2.3 below.

⁹ E.g. such work as Labov 1972a, Sacks 1967-72, Schegloff 1968, 1972.

¹⁰ I.e. work by Barnes, Bellack, Flanders and others as discussed in chapter 3.

¹¹ I.e. work by Parlett, Jackson, Hamilton, Smith, and others as listed in 1.1. above.

communication and on spoken interaction, including some of the classics, develop their arguments and theories without presenting any data whatsoever, in the form, for example, of transcriptions of recorded interactions. (Striking examples here are Bernstein 1972b, Goffman 1955, Hymes 1962, Jakobson 1960, Pride 1971b.) Much of the present study is therefore necessarily concerned with ways of analysing and presenting tape-recorded data on the structure of a speech event and of discourse which comprises the event.

One general assumption in this study has been therefore, that the direction for research is to maintain a clear theoretical framework, but to try and make various concepts more precise by linking them to tape-recorded and observational data. In broad terms, it is fair to say that educational research on classroom language has processed thousands of hours of teacher-pupil talk, with an inexplicit conceptual framework; whereas sociolinguistic research has tended to develop programmatic theory often not directly based on specific interactions. (These generalisations are documented in detail in much of what follows, but see especially 2.3, 7.2, and 8.3.)

Another (historical) reason for the present lack of consensus about what constitutes acceptable and respectable research methods and theory, is that social interaction has been studied in fragmentary ways from within many different academic disciplines, such as linguistics, sociology, social psychology, psychology, psychiatry and social anthropology, for many different purposes. This will be clear from my discussion of relevant literature in chapters 2 and 3. I want to make a few comments on this "interdisciplinary" nature of the field, not merely as further preamble, but as a way of introducing

the theme of what constitute appropriate standards of rigour and appropriate concepts in this area of study.

1.4. "INTERDISCIPLINARY" STUDIES

Being "interdisciplinary" is clearly no guarantee of freedom from pressures on content, methods, style and presentation. The work reported here was done primarily in an explicitly interdisciplinary educational research centre comprising mainly psychologists, sociologists, social anthropologists and linguists, and was also supervised within a department of linguistics. Various papers contributing to the study have been presented at different times to conferences of classroom researchers, sociologists and teachers¹²; to less formal seminars of educational researchers, and applied and theoretical linguists; to individual researchers interested in sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, and teacher-training; and to practising teachers. Clearly, not all of the people were satisfied all of the time. On the other hand, such varied audiences can point to different strengths and weaknesses in the work. A point implicit in much of the argument of the present study is that different types of description and theory are appropriate for different purposes.

This thesis is, then, an explicitly interdisciplinary study linking linguistic and educational research. Various well-known studies have recently made links between different aspects of language

¹² "The sociolinguist in the classroom", Discussion Paper circulated at Conference on Classroom Research, University of Lancaster, January 1972. Stubbs 1974, invited paper read to BSA Social Psychology Group Conference on Ethnomethodology, University of Manchester, January 1973. "Organising Talk in the Classroom", invited paper read to conference on Language, Society and the Individual, University of Birmingham, March 1974.

and education (e.g. Bernstein passim, Lawton 1968, Labov 1969, 1970b, Hymes 1971b, Cazden et al eds. 1972). The present study attempts to make such links in one specific way by developing sociolinguistic concepts to study social behaviour in the classroom.

Sociolinguistics is of course, as its name implies, itself an interdisciplinary area. In this case, the creation of the subject area has involved explicit redefinition of what linguistics should include as problems of study. Hymes (1972 and elsewhere) and Labov (1970) have strongly criticised Chomsky (especially 1965) for defining linguistics in such a way as to relegate language-use to an unexplored bucket-concept of "performance", and therefore as outside linguistics proper. In Kuhnian terms (Kuhn 1962), the debate between Chomsky and the sociolinguists is over the legitimacy of different "paradigms" within linguistics, and the argument is specifically over what counts as theory, and what counts as evidence for different theories. Chomsky (1965) has made the meta-theoretical debate very explicit for theoretical linguistics by distinguishing different levels of "observational", "descriptive" and "explanatory" adequacy which theories may attain. But Labov (1972b, 1973) has put forward a different view of what counts as evidence for linguistic theories, attacking Chomsky's notion that evidence can be drawn unproblematically from the linguist's own intuition. Recently, sociolinguistics has arguably received more of an impetus from sociology than from linguistics, and particularly from sociology in the form of ethnomethodology. Also the study of educational processes has been increasingly influenced by an ethnomethodological approach. (See, for example, Young ed. 1971, and the Open University Course, "School and Society", especially Cosin et al 1971, Esland 1971.)

"Ethnomethodology" is the study of the ways in which people inevitably impute meaning to and interpret all activities in everyday life, and how this interpretive work is constitutive of the social world in which they live. I take up the theme of how we interpret social behaviour from 2.1 onwards. (I should perhaps make clear at this point that the present study is not intended as an ethnomethodological approach, although I have tried to use certain ideas proposed by ethnomethodologists to illuminate the status of the descriptive theory that I develop. In the same way, I have made eclectic use of ideas from sociolinguistic, sociological and educational theory.)

In other words, the "language and education" area as a whole is situated at several interdisciplinary crossroads. But "interdisciplinary" is a fashionable term, with many senses, some trivial. It may refer to passing or more permanent collaboration between subject specialists in different academic disciplines. (This is the sense of the term in my study (Stubbs 1971) of computer-assisted instruction of foreign languages, in which computer programmers, hardware specialists, linguists and educationalists worked together.) It may refer to a study which somehow manages to flout traditional subject boundaries; or which uses the insights of one discipline to do research in another, e.g. which uses a "linguistic" approach in educational research. But such a notion is still vague, since ideas developed within one academic discipline are rarely in a form to be "applied" to another without problems. The term becomes precise, and stronger, when "interdisciplinary" means the integration of descriptive and explanatory concepts from different subject areas.

I can perhaps express the distinction as follows. The term "interdisciplinary" is frequently used to refer to cross-fertilisation of ideas only at the very general level of a broad approach to a research area. For example, a research method such as participant observation, traditionally associated with social anthropology, might be used in educational research, which has traditionally relied on "psychometric" research techniques of administering questionnaires or tests. On the other hand, it seems that the term "interdisciplinary" can be applied in a more precise sense to work, for example, by Labov, which integrates explanatory concepts developed within different disciplines. Labov (1966b) integrates the sociological concept of social class stratification with linguistic concepts of phonological and grammatical variables, by showing very specifically how linguistic variables reflect sociological categories. In other work, Labov (1972a) integrates, within specific explanations of speech behaviour, both sociological concepts of rôle, shared knowledge and social setting, and linguistic concepts of grammatical structure, language function and linguistic rule. That is, linguistic and sociological concepts are closely integrated within the same explanatory rules for speech events.

In the present study, concepts proposed within classroom research and sociolinguistics are criticised and developed, with the aid of concepts from microsociology and ethnomethodology, and to a lesser extent, from the philosophy of language. The parallels between concepts used in these subject areas have been pointed out before (e.g. by Giglioli 1972:13), but they have not been worked out in detail on a specific body of data.

1.5. COMPLEXITY AND LEGITIMACY

The notion of interdisciplinary research inevitably raises the question of its "legitimacy".¹³ This theme was already implicit earlier in this introductory chapter, where I proposed exploring concepts to deal with the notorious complexity of communicative behaviour.

Social psychology in particular has often gone to extreme lengths to "control" complexity, by studying it in laboratory settings, rather than to admit that complexity is an essential feature of social interaction, which should therefore be studied in its own right. Similar assumptions about the possibility of simplifying social behaviour in order to study it, are made in Flanders-type studies which perform an extreme reductionism on the flow of classroom discourse. (See especially 3.2, 7.2 below.)

There is a general paradox here. First, I am convinced that much work on verbal interaction has been panicked into premature quantification and rigour for its own sake, in the belief that any form of rigour is scientific. But I believe also that formal model-building is both productive in providing ideas, and necessary for placing a check on precisely what is being claimed. This will be the gist of my criticism of Flanders-type analysis below: not that it is "wrong", but that the status of the techniques and description have not been called into question and studied. Second, idealisation of data is respectable and unavoidable, but too much idealisation leads to a triumph of method over subject matter, and to the danger that studies

¹³ On the genesis of classroom research as a legitimate field of research, see Hamilton 1972.

may be undertaken simply because there is a convenient method available. (Cook 1971 faults a large amount of social psychology, and studies of interpersonal perception in particular, for this reason.)

In a similar vein, Hudson (1972b) attacks Oxford philosophy and psychology, "in which scorn is discretely poured on any attempt to examine the more complex aspects of human life". He recommends rather placing centrally "the human skills of interpreting or making sense". (My emphases.) The present study is precisely concerned with how we make sense of teachers' talk, read between the lines, hear it as classroom talk, and generally do interpretive work on it.

Parlett, in his work on teaching situations, develops this theme from a slightly different direction when he proposes "illuminative research", which acknowledges the complexity of teaching and learning processes, and which allows the problem to define different techniques which may be combined into a research approach. One of the aims in classroom research, he argues, is to maintain a "recognisable reality", whilst not merely telling the participants what they know already. (Parlett 1970, Parlett & Hamilton 1972.)

1.6. A DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER-TALK

As a specific and final informal introduction to the complexity and "recognisable reality" problem, consider the following description of teacher-talk by Holt (1970:46). I have underlined some of the specific references to speech acts.

"Do teachers talk too much? I'm afraid we do. . . . Some of the time we hand out information. Perhaps we read something from a text. Or we tell students something we think they ought to know. . . . At other times we demonstrate, or explain, or criticise, or correct. . . . Sometimes we run

what we like to call discussions. Even then we usually talk as much as all the students put together. . . . However much they manage to say, answering (our) questions, (we manage) to say more in commenting on their answers and setting up (the) next question. . . . Much of teachers' talk, maybe most of it, is just classroom management - keeping the kids in line. . . . we have these flocks of schoolchildren, twenty-five or more of them, that we are trying to lead or drive down a chosen road. They don't all want to go down that road. . . . So we continually have to round them up and move them along, like a sheepdog herding sheep. Only our voice is the dog. . . . We talk to get the children ready to do what they are supposed to do, and then we talk to make sure they are doing it. We ask about yesterday's homework or tell them about tomorrow's. We talk to keep everyone's attention focussed on the front of the room. Not long ago, I saw an expert teacher. . . . I began to wonder how many of the words he was speaking had to do with actual work and how many had to do with sheepdogging - keeping the class together. It was clear after a while that there was much more sheepdogging than work - two or three times as much. This is not unusual."

Holt's metaphor of "sheepdogging" picks out features of typical teacher-talk in a readily recognisable way. One problem for sociolinguistic research is to systematise such insights into the striking or relevant aspects of teacher-style; to remain close to a recognisable reality, whilst making precise and newsworthy statements about teachers' use of language to keep attention, to explain, to clarify, to correct; to ask questions and to demand answers. The problem poses some tricky questions concerning, for example, the optimum level for analysis of such interaction. (See especially 5.2 below.)

These questions of complexity of subject matter and legitimacy of research lead into the on-going debate over the "new paradigm" in social interaction studies, which I discuss in chapter 2 as the first part of a thematic discussion of some of the relevant literature on social interaction.

1.7. SUMMARY

This study aims to analyse certain characteristic features of teaching behaviour, using naturalistic data collected by observing and tape-recording teachers in the classroom. This analysis does two things. It brings primarily sociolinguistic concepts to bear on an area of research of interest to educationalists. And it uses a specific social setting, the classroom, as a focus for a sociolinguistic study of language in use. In general, the study treats language in the classroom as a problem area to which many types of approach are relevant, rather than studying the topic exclusively from within one specific disciplinary viewpoint.

Chapters 2 and 3 now discuss various studies in social interaction, in sociolinguistics and on language in the classroom, primarily from the point of view of the descriptive concepts they develop. Chapter 4 discusses problems of methodology in naturalistic sociolinguistic studies. Chapters 5 to 8 discuss tape-recorded and observational data on teachers' classroom language. Chapter 9 discusses pupils' own accounts of classroom language. Finally, chapter 10 discusses some wider questions which the research raises, and points to some educational implications.

I have devoted a fair amount of this introductory chapter to a discussion of very general topics (such as interdisciplinary research, the scope of sociolinguistics, and the complex nature of the subject matter), since there is no widely accepted approach to the naturalistic study of social, especially socio-linguistic, behaviour. Sociolinguistics has as yet no well-developed metatheory such as Chomsky has provided for theoretical linguistics.

I will make one remark on general presentation. Partly as an (inevitable) record of false starts¹⁴, but mainly as a theoretical stance, the general argument, especially in chapters 5 and onwards, takes the form of setting up descriptions of classroom language, then to criticise these descriptions and discuss their status. To quote Popper (1959:16),

"whenever we propose a solution to a problem, we ought to try as hard as we can to overthrow our solution, rather than defend it."

¹⁴ Hudson (1966:29) writes, "In practice, scientific research is frequently a muddled, piratical affair, and we do no service to anyone by pretending otherwise. I have tried, therefore, to describe my research not as a neat experiment, but much as it happened." My form of presentation is nevertheless less autobiographical than Hudson 1966, 1968, 1972a.

CHAPTER 2

SOME CONCEPTS IN SOCIAL INTERACTION THEORY

This chapter will attempt to combine selective discussion of literature on the theory of social interaction and sociolinguistics with a development of concepts proposed by different researchers in these fields.

It would be neither practical nor interesting to "review the literature" on social interaction. There is, in fact, no single literature. Relevant work on speech behaviour, social interaction and life in classrooms is spread thinly over several traditional subject areas: sociolinguistics¹, the ethnography of communication², social psychology³, symbolic interactionism⁴, microsociology⁵, ethnomethodology⁶, the philosophy of language⁷, studies of nonverbal

¹ I explained my particular use of this term in 1.2.

² I.e. work by Hymes and others discussed in detail below in 2.3.

³ Especially work by Argyle on the "psychology of interpersonal behaviour". Useful summaries of part of this field are Argyle 1967, Cook 1971.

⁴ See Blumer 1962 for a general discussion of this term, and see 2.1 below.

⁵ This is one term used to refer to the sociology of face-to-face interaction, as represented, for example, by Goffman.

⁶ "Linguistic ethnomethodology" has now developed a distinctive style of its own, and has become one specific type of conversational analysis. See references to Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson, Churchill, Shenkein.

⁷ Especially on the concept of a speech act as in Austin 1955, Searle 1965, 1969.

interaction⁸, and studies of classroom behaviour and language in the classroom.⁹

On the one hand then, there are too many unconnected "facts" in the literature on social interaction, and research could arguably be better devoted to integrating and reflecting more closely on what is already known, rather than on discovering new "facts". Many "facts" already discovered about interaction are almost inaccessible, and therefore largely without value, because they are scattered across the literature of different disciplines. One of the things I will try to do below, not only in this chapter, is to point out instances where comparable concepts and facts have been discovered and developed, apparently independently, by different researchers (see especially 2.5.1, 10.3).

On the other hand, theory which is developed without reference to data, is in danger of becoming mere "theorizing", and I will also constantly emphasise the need for theory of social interaction to be closely tied to observational and recorded data collected in their natural social setting.

In place of a mechanical and chronological review of the literature on social interaction, I will therefore draw out various themes from the literature of different academic areas, concentrating first on general approaches to studies of social interaction; and then on specific concepts proposed for describing social interaction. There are therefore two main, but overlapping, sections in this chapter: a discussion of the "new paradigm" debate in social interaction studies,

⁸ Especially work by Birdwhistell. The term is also used to refer to work by Argyle already mentioned.

⁹ Reviewed in chapter 3.

and a discussion of the appropriateness of different concepts proposed to describe and explain social, particularly verbal, interaction. In each case I will discuss in fair detail a few pieces of work which are especially revealing, and refer briefly to other work in the field. Also I will tend to move from general comments on the theory of social interaction, towards my own development of the specific concepts required to deal with spoken interaction in teaching situations. This chapter will, then, be not merely a review, but a preliminary development of several themes to be worked out in more detail in later chapters on data recorded in teaching situations.

I will also move from work on the theory of social interaction (in this chapter) to specific studies of the substantive area of classroom language (in chapter 3). This distinction will be primarily for practical reasons of presentation.

I begin now with a discussion of Harré and Secord's recent book The Explanation of Social Behaviour (1972). This work was published after most of the concepts in the present study had already been developed. But because of its clarity, the work has helped me to formulate many of my points in a clearer way. Its comprehensiveness also provides a useful framework for introducing other concepts which I wish to discuss.

2.1. HARRE & SECORD (1972) THE EXPLANATION OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR¹⁰

I will discuss Harré and Secord's recent book in some detail, since it provides a good starting point for introducing several concepts

¹⁰ I am particularly grateful to David Hamilton for our discussions of this book.

which I will develop later on specific data collected in teaching situations: namely, the "monitoring" of behaviour, the concept of rule-governed episodes of social interaction, and the concept of "accounts" of social action. The book is the only general exposition of a framework of social interaction theory which takes account of the "new paradigm", that is, which advocates theoretically sensitive study of social behaviour through observation of people in the real world. So a discussion of the work also makes it relatively easy to refer to other work in the field at relevant points.¹¹

There is little explicitly about sociolinguistics in the book, although there is a lot about language, specifically with respect to linguistic philosophy. Harré and Secord talk mainly of "social psychology", but they are, in effect, attempting to articulate a general theory of social interaction, and, as I will show, their concepts are applicable to speech as social behaviour.

The authors claim to "articulate the New Paradigm" (p.19) in social psychology, and set out their book with textbook precision. (perhaps prematurely): long summaries at the beginning of each chapter giving numbered statements of positions argued, much repetition, dry style, and no original substantive research reported. When the book appeared, it received enthusiastic reviews.¹² Harré himself has recently given an equally enthusiastic review to Filmer

¹¹ Filmer et al (1972) is a useful statement of a more radical approach to social action from a phenomenological point of view. This book is primarily concerned however with very general questions of the nature of sociological theory. I will refer to parts of it as appropriate.

¹² E.g. Laurie Taylor, New Society 13.5.72, called it "brilliant", "splendid", "undoubtedly one of the most important contributions to have been made to social psychology within recent years". More recent reviews, e.g. Ingleby 1973, have been more critical.

et al's New Directions in Sociological Theory (1972) which argues a phenomenological and ethnomethodological approach to sociology.¹³ In his review, Harré attempts to "locate ethnomethodology within the larger framework of the 'ethogenic' movement". ("Ethogeny" is defined as the discovery of the generative mechanisms which give rise to behaviour.) I will argue below however that Harré and Secord do not follow the position put forward by Filmer et al.¹⁴

Harré and Secord claim, then, to articulate the new paradigm for "the general theoretical study of social psychology and its methodology" (p.2). Essentially, they attack laboratory or experimental social psychology because it rests on a philosophically indefensible view of man. Laboratory experiments assume, in varying degrees, that man is a passive, information-processing machine; whereas Harré and Secord argue that he is an active agent, who monitors, watches, observes, and interprets behaviour. In addition, the laboratory is not neutral: it is itself a social situation with its own norms of expected and appropriate behaviour. The "control" of behaviour in laboratory settings is therefore spurious. One way they sum up their position is (p.6):

"In the anthropomorphic model, the person is not only an agent, but a watcher, commentator and critic as well."

The book is closely argued, but it does not involve too much oversimplification to say that Harré and Secord have three main points to make and develop:

(1) that the study of social behaviour must proceed by setting up

¹³ Times Higher Educational Supplement, 4.8.72: "a really superb book".

¹⁴ Torode (1972) also argues this with reference to Harré and Secord's espousal of Goffman's role-distance model.

models and analogies, especially of "episodes" of behaviour (p.179);

- (2) that man is an active agent in social situations, and is conscious and self-monitoring; and
- (3) that (because man monitors his actions) he can give accounts of them.

The authors' other points follow on from these three. They argue, for example, that it is through studying people's accounts that the researcher can gain access to the meanings and origins of social behaviour, and the rules which structure episodes of behaviour. Social behaviour is possible because people respond in terms of meaningful interpretations of others' actions. This position is also argued at length by the symbolic interactionists:

"The term 'symbolic interaction' refers . . . to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings . . . the fact that human beings interpret or 'define' each others' actions instead of merely reacting to each others' actions. Their '~~response~~' is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meanings which they attach to such actions."
(Blumer 1962.)¹⁵

Harré and Secord therefore argue that research on social interaction should proceed by collecting and analysing accounts of social action, which are composed of the enormously subtle and refined terms and concepts of everyday language (p.54). (This is where the link with Oxford linguistic philosophy is made.)

In general then, Harré and Secord are concerned with several topics to be developed at length in the present study: the ways in

¹⁵ The topic of ethnomethodology is also how people go about finding meanings in social actions, and go about understanding each other. But for a statement of differences between the symbolic interactionist approach and ethnomethodology, see Denzin 1970, Zimmerman & Wieder 1970.

which people interact in natural situations; the monitoring, interpreting and accounting for social behaviour; and the need for a theory of social interaction. I now want to argue, however, that Harré and Secord set up these issues and then sidestep some of the difficulties involved.

At a very general level they argue that the social sciences cannot rest on positivist principles, laying great stress on the fact that the advanced natural sciences are not themselves positivist, first because the natural sciences progress in a much more confused way than outsiders often realise¹⁶, and second because they admit unobservable explanatory concepts such as "powers" and "potentialities". So it is pointless to try and be "scientific" by aping what the natural sciences do not do. An extreme positivist position in the social sciences treats social or behavioural facts as things, examines only observable relations between them, and can therefore study only what is operationally defined. Behaviourism is the extreme positivist position in psychology, since it turns the study of "mind" (unobservable) into the science of "behaviour" (observable). (The Skinner-Chomsky debate over language acquisition is framed in terms of observables and what Chomsky claims as the behaviourists' "lack of interest in theory". (Chomsky 1959.)) A positivist position is untenable in the study of social behaviour since people do not react to each others' words or behaviour in a stimulus-response

¹⁶ Cf the quote from Hudson 1966, in 1.7, and the Popper quotes in 4.3 below. Ethnomethodology argues more strongly that science, like any other activity, is accomplished by day-to-day practical decision-making, and is therefore not a privileged activity with a special rationality. On this see Garfinkel 1967, Elliot 1974.

fashion. They react only as behaviour is mediated through long strings of interpretation and reinterpretation.¹⁷

It will become clear below, however, that Harré and Secord do not completely escape a positivist approach themselves. They assume for example that social "episodes" and "rules" are things "out there", simply waiting to be discovered, and they have an ambivalent attitude to "accounts" of social action. Also confusing is their advocating the irrelevance of positivism and then recommending Oxford linguistic philosophy which is an offshoot of logical positivism, without at least some discussion of whether linguistic philosophy escapes its positivist origins.

I will now develop some of these general points in a discussion of Harré and Secord's central concepts of "monitoring" and "accounts".

2.1.1. "Monitoring" and "accounts"

I continue now with the concept of "monitoring" since one of the main ideas which I develop in the present study is that teachers have characteristic ways of monitoring classroom talk, as a way of organising it.

The first point is that, in spite of the title of the book, and the claim to deal with social behaviour, Harré and Secord talk almost exclusively of individual behaviour and self-monitoring. There is next to nothing in the book about how people interpret and monitor other people's behaviour, although this is clearly a central feature

¹⁷ A full discussion of this theme in the philosophy of the social sciences is outside the scope of the present study. For a full treatment of the arguments, see Filmer et al., 1972, especially Walsh's chapter on positivism. Cf also the quotes from Labov in 4.2 below.

of social interaction. Three quotes will illustrate their emphasis on individual as opposed to social behaviour:

- (1) "Social behaviour is mostly consciously self-monitored rule-following."
 - (2) "What differentiates men from all other organisms is that . . . they are capable of monitoring their own self-monitoring."
 - (3) "The most unique feature of a potential language user is the capacity to monitor the control of one's own actions."
- (Pp.147, 89, 6. My emphases.)

Clearly people do monitor their own behaviour. There is a large literature in linguistics, for example, on how people correct slips in their own speech. (See Fry 1970 for a review of some of this research.) Labov (1966) proposes that styles of speech can be ranged along a single casual-formal dimension according to how much attention the speaker pays to his own speech.

But speakers also routinely monitor other speakers' speech, in order to interpret it. I show in detail below in chapters 5 to 8 how a central feature of teachers' style is their constant verbal monitoring and commenting on their pupils' speech. I therefore prefer Goffman's (1964) notion of monitoring. He defines a social situation as "an environment of mutual monitoring possibilities". (It is strange that Harré and Secord do not develop this theme at all, although they take over Goffman's "role distance" model without question.)

I also take issue with Harré and Secord over their notion of "accounts". First, although they advocate (p.152) studying "life situations" or studying "people as they really live their lives", they elsewhere advocate studying accounts of action, rather than social action itself, in situ. They imply that the crucial data about what social interaction means, will come from an analysis of

accounts constructed after the event. For example (p.9):

"At the heart of the explanation of social behaviour is the identification of meanings that underlie it. Part of the approach to discovering them involves the obtaining of accounts. . . . These must be collected and analysed, often leading to the discovery of the rules that underlie the behaviour."

They say that this is only part of the research procedure, but give no detailed proposals for any other. An even clearer statement of the ultimate recourse to accounts as the primary data is in Harré 1971:

"The achievement of extracting a science from anecdote is largely a matter of having an adequate conceptual system for the analysis of accounts and commentaries."

In any case, Harré and Secord fail to discuss the distinction between (a) accounting for social interaction as and when one is involved in it, and (b) reconstructing post hoc or third person accounts, after the event. Chapter 9 below is devoted to analysing pupils' and teachers' third person accounts of teaching situations. But I also show how the language that a teacher uses in the classroom is an on-going account of the speech event of which it is a part. (See e.g. 8.1.) So my first point in this connection is that Harré and Secord propose to study only retrospective logic and not logic in use.

Second, Harré and Secord also hesitate over whether the accounts that they elicit are mere data or are analyses of action in their own right. For example, contrast these two statements:

- (1) "The things that people say about themselves and other people should be taken seriously as reports of data relevant to phenomena that really exist and which are relevant to the explanation of behaviour. This contrasts with the mistaken view that the statements themselves are the phenomena." (P.7, emphasis in original.)
- (2) "The accounts produced in response to challenge are the real material of the study. . . . The final content analysis of accounts will yield internal structures of varying degrees

of strength. . . . By this procedure it may be possible to discover what are the possible cognitive structures associated with attitude." (Pp.311-312.)

On the one hand they accept people's own accounts as authoritative, and as the only reports of behaviour it is possible to have (p.8). On the other hand, accounts themselves are to be analysed by the researcher to reveal their underlying logic.

Either way, Harré and Secord take for granted the "rules" which they elicit in accounts. They point out that rule-like propositions are suited to appear in people's accounts of social action: people use rules to explain or account for events. But Harré and Secord themselves propose rules as a way of explaining social behaviour. In other words, they never discuss the status of their rules which are in fact "mere" lay or commonsense rules.¹⁸ I will show in detail below (in chapter 9) that speakers routinely produce rules in the course of post hoc accounts of social action, in order to explain it; but that they also use rules in the course of interaction, in order to comment on, account for and control that interaction. And I will discuss the status of rules of speech behaviour which I propose (as researcher) *vis-à-vis* members' rules.

Finally, Harré and Secord pay little attention to the effect of context on accounts: in other words they ignore the situated character of all accounts of social behaviour, including their own. This gap in their argument is strange, since they start their book by stating a very clear case for the effect of the laboratory situation on behaviour. In other words, they give no indication of how the analysis

¹⁸ For a discussion of rules as a commonsense way of accounting for behaviour, see especially Zimmerman 1971.

of (the underlying logic of) a report of behaviour can take into account the situation in which the report is produced or elicited. It is clear on a purely commonsense level that one gives different accounts to different people for different reasons: that, for example, one does not give the same account of why one wants to borrow money, to one's wife and to one's bank manager.

I discuss other literature on "accounts" in chapter 9, which deals specifically with pupils' accounts of teaching situations.

To emphasise the point again, the reader should in no sense infer that I am wholly critical of Harré and Secord's book. On the contrary, it is a most useful general statement of an approach to studying social interaction which is radically different to an experimental or laboratory approach.¹⁹ What I have begun to do here is to suggest how some of their concepts can be further developed. I have also used their argument as a framework for beginning to propose that the sociolinguistics of face-to-face interaction should be explicitly concerned with questions of how connected discourse is interpreted in the course of specific social situations. I now continue this argument by looking at different concepts for dealing with social

¹⁹ I should mention here that Argyle (ed. 1973) also claims to express the "new paradigm" in social psychology and to present an approach to studying social encounters which is "new" and "rather different", and in which "social behaviour is studied in natural settings or replicas of natural settings" (p.9). In fact, however, out of 28 papers which Argyle presents, only three (by Birdwhistell, Goffman, and Sherif & Sherif) are based on direct observation or recording of "natural settings", whilst nine papers are experimental laboratory studies, and a further eight use questionnaires or artificial tests to represent behaviour. The other papers are a mixture of conceptual analyses, behaviourist studies, and a paper on primates. Argyle is therefore not using the term "new paradigm" in the same sense as Harré and Secord, nor to refer to studies similar in approach to the present study.

interaction, which have been proposed by sociolinguists.

2.2. SOME DIFFICULTIES WITH CORRELATIONAL SOCIOLOGICALS

One approach to social interaction theory which Harré and Secord vigorously attack is a behaviourist approach. An unsatisfactory behaviourist position is sometimes implied in work on language-variation. For example, Crystal and Davy (1969:64) state that:

"an aspect or aspects of the context exercises some kind of conditioning influence on the (linguistic) features in question." (My emphasis.)

I assume that such statements are not intended to be taken literally, that they represent a kind of shorthand, and that they are not intended to exclude the study of the speaker himself - as in some of the more extreme behaviourist approaches to verbal behaviour where there is talk of "getting rid of the speaker entirely" (Skinner 1957:312). However, it is no real solution to expand such statements from what I take to be their shorthand form, and to introduce the speaker as some kind of intervening variable between context and language-use. The speaker's contribution must be studied directly, for context "determines" language-use only insofar as it is mediated through the meanings which the speaker assigns to the context in which he finds himself. (Cf the Blumer 1962 quote in 2.1 above.) Introducing the speaker as an intervening variable merely changes an implicit S-R model into an S-O-R (stimulus-organism-response) model and fails to attack the central problem of how meanings are assigned.

This point can be developed into a statement of a general problem with correlational models of the interaction of language-use and social setting as follows. Almost all of the most valuable and revealing work which has been done in sociolinguistics involves the

concept of a correlation between features of language and features of the social context in which language is used. This kind of research starts from the premise that all speakers change their style of speech to suit the social situation in which they find themselves. It goes on to point out the very large number of features which "condition" features of language-use, and draws general conclusions of the form: language and society are in "patterned covariation" (Fishman 1964); social structure is "reflected in" linguistic structure, or linguistic structure is "an index of" social structure (Labov 1966, Herman 1961, Bright 1966).

One immediate difficulty with this kind of approach which searches for environmental influences on language-form is that the contextual factors which can be shown to have an effect on features of language in use are not obviously limited to any manageable number. In other words, there is the same difficulty which vitiates much of the work on "context of situation" in the tradition of Malinowski and Firth. Quite simply, the number of contexts of situation seems to be infinite. Goffman (1964)²⁰ has expressed his scepticism of correlational approaches to sociolinguistics as follows:

"It hardly seems possible to name a social variable that doesn't show up and have its little systematic effect upon speech behaviour: age, sex, class, caste, country of origin, generation, region, schooling, cultural cognitive assumptions, bilingualism, and so forth."

²⁰ The choice of title for this article, "The neglected situation", is slightly confusing, since Goffman is criticising precisely an approach which seeks relations between "language" and "situation". Goffman defines "situation" here in terms of face-to-face interaction and feedback: "an environment of mutual monitoring possibilities", the expression already quoted above. The dispute is over different concepts of "situation". His own term "encounter" might have been less ambiguous.

So a correlational approach to sociolinguistic variation, whether or not it incorporates an implicit S-R component, runs the risk of producing a never-ending stream of environmental determinants or correlates of linguistic form. As a consequence, such an approach may continue to describe variety after variety of language, simply because they are there.

A recent criticism of the correlational approach to sociolinguistics has been put forward by Pride (1971b). Pride makes the point that a correlational approach assumes that "language" and "situation" are separate, since it would be meaningless to posit correlations between different aspects of the same phenomenon. But Pride insists, on the contrary, that language and situation are "part and parcel" of each other. (I argued this informally in 1.2.) He defends this argument on several levels. First, a shift of language, that is, some form of code-switch, may be the only observable change in a situation. If nonlinguistic aspects of the situation are assumed to have changed, these can be described only by reference to speakers' attitudes or moods. A shift in style of language may be precisely the cue that the linguist picks up in order to allow him to infer that the non-linguistic situation has changed. In other words, there is a danger of circularity. Second, as well as situation "conditioning" language, language may be used in such a way as to define the situation. The adoption of a particular tone of voice or style can put pressure on the social relationship between speakers, just as much as the relationship can demand certain forms of speech. A major topic in this present study will be how teachers' style of language-use is both demanded by (expected in) the classroom situation, and also defines the classroom situation.

Perhaps the main general criticism of a strictly correlational approach, as this is often conceived, is that the model is static. (The criticisms of Goffman and Pride move towards this point but never make it explicit.) In spite of placing language variation at the centre of linguistic study, and criticising much theoretical linguistics for assuming a totally homogeneous object of study, sociolinguistics is nevertheless simply content to describe language varieties, which are still typically assumed to be discrete. There has been in fact little attempt to develop a model which can deal with sociolinguistic interaction between speakers. There is for example little use of concepts such as feedback, and (as Pride points out) rarely any consideration of how two language varieties may converge and mix. (For a preliminary discussion of the concepts of "convergence" and "divergence" in speech with reference to accent, see however Giles 1971; and also Lennard & Bernstein 1960 on the interdependence of speakers' styles of language.)

If language varieties are assumed to be discrete, they are reified. In the present study, I have not assumed teacher-talk to be an entirely discrete style; I have, rather, emphasised how it makes more frequent use of features which are essential in any conversational use of language. I continue these points below (especially in 7.2 and 8.5) in part of my discussion of educational research on language in the classroom, which has tended to treat teacher-pupil-talk as an isolated style, and make no links between it and other uses of language.^{21, 22}

²¹ The misleading assumption that language varieties are discrete categories runs into the same difficulties as assuming that
(cont.)

2.3. CONCEPTS IN THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF SPEAKING

Ultimately the distinction between "correlational sociolinguistics" and the approach known as the "ethnography of speaking" is one of degree and of emphasis, but it is possible to make some generalisations without being too unfair to either approach.

Correlational sociolinguistics, drawing largely on the theory and methodology of traditional survey style sociology, has tended to favour relatively macro-studies which isolate features of linguistic form and correlate these with features of social structure or social setting. The clearest form of this type of study is Labov's (1966) study of New York speech, which demonstrated clear correlations between speakers' use of grammatical and phonological variables, and the social class of the speakers as well as with the formality of the social situation. Studies in the ethnography of speaking on the other hand, drawing on traditional methods in social anthropology, have taken the social situation as central and have attempted to treat language behaviour as a unified system of communication. In other words, these studies have tried to show how language is used in context as a communication system, rather than to correlate isolated linguistic variables with context. As I say, these distinctions are by no means clear-cut, but in general the present study has followed primarily the latter approach by taking the classroom to be a

categories of speech acts or speech functions are definably discrete. This will be a major topic below (8.1 ff.). For a parallel discussion of this problem in anthropology see Leach 1961, whose argument I adapt slightly however in 5.2.

- 22 Reid (1974) similarly discusses how the notion of a "doctor-patient relationship" is reified by doctors and sociologists alike, and argues that it is a social interaction like any other.

specific ethnographic setting.

I will now discuss the type of sociolinguistic study, proposed by Dell Hymes under the label "ethnography of speaking" or "ethnography of communication". Again, I will not give a full review of Hymes' work, but concentrate on certain of his central concepts and discuss to what extent they are applicable to the kind of tape-recorded speech data on which the present study is based.

I want to concentrate on several specifically sociolinguistic concepts, originally proposed or primarily developed by Hymes: "communicative competence", "speech event" and "speech function". These three concepts are central in the present study, but I will argue that (as Hymes defines them) they break down, to some extent at least, when applied to data in the form of tape-recordings or observational notes of specific speech situations or episodes of social behaviour.²³ I will refer mainly to Hymes' (1962) original article on the ethnography of speaking, and to one of his latest (1972a) on models of the interaction of language and social life. The same concepts are also discussed in Hymes' many intervening papers. (See Hymes 1964a, 1964b, 1966, 1967, 1971a, 1972b, and others.)

The first point to make is that Hymes does not himself claim that his concepts can be applied without modification to specific social (spoken) interactions. He is explicitly working at the level of general cultural patterns of behaviour, of the "speech

²³ I should mention here, for nonlinguist readers, that "data" in Chomskyan linguistics consist of the linguist's own intuitions about his language. Grammarians rarely use a "corpus" of tape-recorded data. An exception is Quirk et al whose Grammar of Contemporary English uses, but is not based entirely on, recordings of different kinds.

economy"²⁴ of the social group or speech community, or even more generally in terms of speech areas (Hymes 1967:18) which may comprise several distinct speech communities. On the other hand, he does also make statements about "speech events" and face-to-face encounters, and gives examples of speech functions at the level of individual utterances. Also, if the concepts cannot be linked in some way to specific, observable and recordable speech behaviour, then they may ultimately be of limited value.

2.3.1. Communicative competence

The main unifying concept in Hymes' work is "communicative competence", which is defined as:

"what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings".

(Gumperz & Hymes, eds., 1972:vii.) This concept has not changed significantly since Hymes 1962, where he talks of what a child internalises about speaking, besides rules of grammar and a dictionary, to participate appropriately in verbal activities. This notion is proposed in opposition to Chomsky's concept of "competence", which has to do primarily with a native speaker's ability to recognise distinctions between grammatical, ungrammatical and ambiguous sentences out of context. This tacit knowledge is taken by Chomsky (e.g. 1965) to be the central and defining topic of linguistics. He has shown in great detail the awesome complexity of the knowledge of

²⁴ Although Hymes uses this term frequently, I cannot find an explicit statement of what it means. It seems to refer simply to the way in which different factors, speech functions, speech events, etc., fit together in some, as yet undefined, way. The topic of study is to find the pattern. See Hymes 1962:108-9.

abstract syntactic structures which underlie production and recognition of grammatical sentences. But although the extreme idealisation of Chomsky's approach is heuristically sound and has led to great advances in syntactic theory, it is unhelpful in sociolinguistics, where it has the unfortunate consequence of relegating everything else about language-use to a bucket-category of "performance". For "performance" then refers in a totally indiscriminating way to everything concerning the use of language: from minor slips of the tongue and hesitations, through to complex knowledge about what different styles of language are appropriate in different social situations. This inadequacy, for studies of language in use, of Chomsky's original competence-performance distinction, has now been pointed out many times. Hymes (1964b) claims to sketch the basis on which a "thorough critique of linguistic theory can be constructed" (i.e. Chomskyan theory). Labov (1970a) continues essentially the same attack on Saussurian/Chomskyan theoretical linguistics, whilst insisting that there can be no going back on the standards of rigour and on the concepts of underlying structure which Chomsky has proposed. (For other critiques of Chomsky's competence-performance distinction, see Crystal & Davy 1969:111, Campbell & Wales 1970, Sankoff 1972.) Hymes (1967:16) sums up his criticism of Chomsky's concept of competence as follows:

"A child capable of any and all grammatical utterances, but not knowing which to use, not knowing even when to talk and when to stop, would be a cultural monstrosity."

The kinds of knowledge, apart from grammatical, which speakers need in order to be able to speak appropriately on different occasions, have begun to be investigated by many researchers. Among such studies, some now classics, are: studies of code-switching, whether

between different languages or different dialects or styles, according to topic, listener and social situation (e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1964, Ferguson 1959, Fischer 1958, Gumperz & Hernandez-Chavez 1972, Labov 1969, 1972a, Rubin 1968, Salmond 1972); studies of the choice of terms of addressee (Brown & Gilman 1960, Brown & Ford 1961, Ervin-Tripp 1972); studies of rules of etiquette and the manipulation of social relations through talk (Frake 1964, Geertz 1960); studies of appropriate occasions for speech and silence (Basso 1970); studies of the subcultural knowledge required to correctly interpret speech events (Labov 1972, 1973); and studies of the explicit knowledge about language itself which a hearer requires to correctly interpret speech behaviour (Albert 1964).

The main concept linking these papers is that different styles of language are appropriate in different situations, and that the speaker has to have knowledge about situations, not just about language structure, to be able to speak appropriately. This is the main topic of an "ethnography", as defined by some anthropologists:

"An ethnography should properly specify what it is that a stranger to a society would have to know in order to perform any role in any scene staged by the society."

(Goodenough 1957.) With a couple of exceptions (Labov 1972a, Salmond 1972) these papers do not however use the concept of communicative competence to explore how specific speech events are organised. Like Hymes' own work, to a greater or lesser extent, they analyse cultural patterns of speech behaviour, and not specific recorded conversations, discussions, rituals and exchanges. Of those papers listed, only Labov (1972a, on ritual insults) provides an analysis of speech data in the form of utterances tape-recorded in context. In the present study, I will show with reference to tape-recorded data, how the

language which teachers use in talking to their pupils, implies knowledge which is taken for granted about the social situation in the classroom.

At a superficial level, Hymes' concept of communicative competence seems close to the ethnomethodologists' demand that:

"one seek to understand members' sense of adequacy and appropriateness in interaction"

(Filmer et al 1972:177). However, some of the differences in the two approaches can be seen by looking at the etic-emic distinction which Hymes uses to characterise his work. (See for example Hymes 1964:14). Hymes insists that the ethnographer of communication must give attention to the range of ways of speaking which are culturally significant or relevant to the speech community he is studying. The researcher cannot identify in advance, as an outsider, what count as communicative events. Talking specifically of ethnographies of communication in the classroom, Hymes (1972a) demands that the teacher be his own ethnographer.

The term "emic" is used then of distinctions which are meaningful, functional or relevant within a system. For example, phonemes are the functional units at one level of linguistic analysis. Whereas phonetic analysis is concerned with sounds, described in terms of articulation or acoustics, without reference to meaning. But even at the phonological level this distinction is problematic. For example, the International Phonetic Alphabet so-called, is in fact an implicit emic classification of sounds, which have been found useful for transcribing a specific range of languages, and due to such practical considerations the Alphabet is biased towards European languages. Narrow phonetic transcription can only be approximated by building on

the basic symbols in the Alphabet through an ad hoc collection of diacritics. The etic-emic distinction loses most of its usefulness altogether when applied to frameworks for studying the social use of language. This is because (as I have already argued in 2.1) the study of language in context inevitably involves the study of interpretations of language. And as soon as one is involved in studying interpretations, one is also involved in emic classifications of what is relevant, important and meaningful to participants. Hymes, however, tends to use the etic-emic distinction unquestioningly. He claims, with false modesty, that his factors-functions framework (to be discussed in the following sections) for studying the ethnography of speaking is "merely" a "heuristic" or "etic" framework, which can help the researcher know what to look for, and is not a "model". He speaks of his work as "toward toward a theory" (Hymes 1972c. See also especially Hymes 1962, 1967, 1972a. And of 4.1 and note 1 in chapter 4).

But one topic of study of an ethnography of speaking should be precisely the knowledge and interpretation involved in "knowing what to look for" and in setting up a framework which specifies what it is relevant to look for. A vast amount of interpretive work and selection has gone into Hymes' heuristic frameworks. They are therefore not "etic" at all. At most they are "etic" in the negative sense of not corresponding with native categories. They are not (and could not in principle be) neutrally etic. But the correspondance between Hymes' knowledge and the categories is unexplored. It is this knowledge that an ethnomethodological approach would explore.

The way I have dealt with this problem in the present study, is to set up a heuristic set of categories for teacher-talk, and then to

explore the type of knowledge which I would need about teacher-talk in order to be able to do this. For this is the same knowledge that teachers and pupils use to "bring off" and recognise appropriate teacher-talk. (See further 9.10.)²⁵

2.3.2. Speech events

The over-arching concept of communicative competence becomes clearer when it is discussed in relation to speech events and speech functions. Part of the tacit knowledge which all speakers have is that different forms of speech are appropriate in different speech events. The boundaries of speech events can probably not be rigorously defined, but all speakers of English recognise intuitively, if loosely, many events at the level of face-to-face encounters, e.g., to repeat some of the examples already cited in 1.2, conversation, discussion, interview, lecture, radio talk, seminar, school lesson, gossip, argument, salestalk, Sunday sermon, inaugural address, meeting, conference, and so on. Hymes (1972c) distinguishes such speech events from speech situations and speech acts. As examples of speech situations he gives: party, ceremony, hunt, meal, lovemaking, and memorial service. These are social situations in which speech typically occurs, and which may enter as contexts into rules of

²⁵ I should perhaps add a note here for the educational reader who is not entirely familiar with the type of argument used by Hymes. It will be clear that in my discussion of "communicative competence" I have nowhere acknowledged the role of individual characteristics of speaker and listener; i.e. I am using the term, as Hymes does, to refer to social knowledge or to a framework of boundary conditions. In the whole of this study, as I have already stated (e.g. 1.2, 1.6 above), I am concerned with how "teaching" can be characterised in sociolinguistic terms, rather than with how individuals' teaching styles can be characterised.

speaking. As examples of speech acts one might list: state, assert, warn, remark, comment, command, order, request, criticise, apologise, censure, welcome, promise, ask, and so on.²⁶ Hymes defines speech acts as the minimal term of this set, and exemplifies his schema as:

speech situation:	party
speech event:	conversation
speech act:	joke.

As with other aspects of his theory, these distinctions are useful at the level of general cultural patterns of speech behaviour. But they are too broad to be directly applicable to specific conversational data.

Essentially the speech situation seems both more complex and more flexible than Hymes' schema implies. For example, he defines the speech act as the minimal unit. But clearly, a "joke", which he uses as his main example in illustrations, is not a minimal unit of discourse structure. Jokes have internal organisation into, for example, preface, story and punchline. (Sacks 1972 is a detailed examination of the internal organisation of a joke into such smaller structural units.) Similarly, one can think of further units or stages within speech events, which are intuitively felt to be coherent, but which are themselves composed of speech acts, for example, greetings, which may stretch over several speech acts²⁷, exchanging

²⁶ For other discussions of speech acts see Austin 1955, Searle 1965. Austin (1955:149) claims that there are over a thousand such terms in English for speech acts. Cf also appendix D to chapter 9 below for a list of over a hundred terms elicited from informants.

²⁷ Sacks (lectures 1967) emphasises that greetings are only the beginning of the beginning of a conversation; i.e. there is at least one level of organisation between "acts" and "events". The

pleasantries, catching up on news, and leave taking. Perhaps such units within speech events coincide merely with topic boundaries. But topics typically have great coherence within conversations: people almost always know "what is being talked about", and can generally formulate this if asked to. Also, there are sociolinguistic rules governing the order in which such stages of a speech event may be introduced. (On the order of topics in a conversation, see Schegloff & Sacks 1973.)

In summary then, Hymes' three-part distinction between speech situations, events and acts is, as he himself emphasises, only a framework with which to approach specific interactions, and does not account for the organisation of spoken discourse. One of my main aims below will be to develop some of Hymes' concepts in order to deal more closely with an aspect of the problem of how a speech event is organised. I will do this by developing Hymes' concepts of speech functions.

2.3.3. Speech functions

Hymes' concepts of speech functions are developed from an article by Jakobson (1960) and first discussed in any detail in Hymes 1962.

Hymes begins with the notion that language has many functions, that it serves different functions in different social situations, that it inevitably serves many functions simultaneously, and that language serves different functions in different cultures (although

most detailed proposal for analysing levels of organisation in spoken discourse is Sinclair *et al* 1972 which proposed a Hallidayan rank-scale with five hierarchically ordered ranks between interaction (i.e. speech event) and act. See 3.9.

this last point will not concern me here). For heuristic reasons, most twentieth century linguistics, in the tradition from De Saussure through American structural linguistics to Chomsky, has explicitly ignored the different functions of language in use in order to concentrate linguistic analysis on linguistic structures. Hymes (1964b) writes at length on the reasons and effects of this idealisation of the subject matter of theoretical linguistics.

A commonsense way of expressing the now commonplace sociolinguistic notion that language has many functions is as follows. In a lecture or a Third Programme talk - or in this present study - language has as its primary function the task of getting a message across, and of persuading the addressee of some point of view. But cocktail party chat, talk about the weather, reminiscing about old friends, a headmaster's address to the school, or even pupils' avid discussion of last night's football match, may have the primary function of establishing or maintaining social relationships and solidarity; very little new information may be communicated. Other functions of language include: organising social effort; reliving experiences; releasing tension or "getting something off one's chest"; crystallising ideas or "putting something in a nutshell"; remembering things - a mnemonic function; measuring time; or simply filling embarrassing silences.

Hymes (1962) proposes seven "broad types" of function which language in use serves²⁸:

²⁸ For comparable schemas, which provide slightly different taxonomic lists of speech functions, see: Ervin-Tripp 1964, Halliday 1969, Crystal & Davy 1969, Robinson 1972:53; and Jakobson 1960 from which Hymes' schema was developed.

1. expressive/emotive
2. directive/conative/persuasive
3. poetic (focussing on language form or linguistic expression)
4. contact (physical or psychological)
5. metalinguistic (focussing on meaning)
6. referential
7. contextual/situational.

He argues that these seven functions correspond, in general terms but not neatly, to various "factors" to which speakers attend in speech situations. Appropriate speech may depend on different combinations of:

1. the sender
2. the receiver
3. the message form
4. the channel, e.g. speech versus writing
5. the code, e.g. dialect, language or jargon
6. the topic
7. the setting or situation.

In his 1970c paper, Hymes adds considerably to this list, but for my present purposes, it is not necessary to go into his more recent refinement of his schema. Again, rather than "review" Hymes' schema of speech functions for its own sake, I propose to discuss the aspect of it which is particularly relevant to my interests in this study, and to develop aspects of it which are therefore particularly relevant to analysing classroom talk.

2.4. SPEECH FUNCTIONS AND MONITORING CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

The speech functions which Hymes calls "contact", "metalinguistic" and "poetic" seem particularly closely related to a teacher's practical concerns in the classroom. They have to do, in fact, with the concerns of teachers so well characterised in metaphorical fashion by the passage from John Holt quoted in 1.6: with the ways in which a teacher characteristically "sheepdogs" his pupils by getting and keeping their attention (contact), by constantly checking on their understanding (metalinguistic) and by focussing on message-form and on how they express things (poetic).²⁹ They have to do, in other words, with ways in which a speaker monitors the speech situation in which he finds himself, and in particular monitors potential trouble spots in the communication system. Some of the links should now be clear between Harré and Secord's view of social behaviour as rule-governed "episodes" of behaviour in which people monitor each other's actions, and Hymes' concepts of "speech events".

Little is known about how speakers actually communicate in problematic situations and across any kind of language gap, including the language gap between teachers and pupils. But various researchers have shown that problems of communication do not result in a straightforward way from objective differences between the language of speaker and hearer. Wolff (1959), with reference to Nigerian languages, has shown the importance of cultural attitudes and non-linguistic factors in situations of communication across language and

²⁹ "Poetic" function as defined by Hymes clearly covers much more than this. It includes, in fact, a very wide range of functions from a commonsense view of "poetic" to proofreading. (Hymes 1962) See further on this notes 30 and 31 to this chapter below.

dialect boundaries, and has shown that objective linguistic differences do not necessarily coincide with communication boundaries. The whole area of distinction between "language" and "communication" has thus only begun to be explored. This is one aspect of the distinction between Chomsky's concept of grammatical competence and Hymes' concept of communicative competence. Haugen (1966) has replicated Wolff's findings by showing that there is a skewed relationship of claimed mutual comprehensibility among speakers of the Scandinavian languages. More monolingual Danes, for example, claim to understand Swedish than vice-versa. Haugen's results bring out the complexities of the question most clearly. Obviously, there is as much objective structural linguistic difference between Danish and Swedish as vice-versa. Thus the communication and understanding must depend on cultural attitudes, values and beliefs, and not merely on structural linguistic factors. E. T. Hall (1959) is one of the few writers to tackle the problem of cross-cultural communication directly, in the sense of describing people's reactions in face-to-face social encounters, but he is concerned mainly with nonverbal communication.

None of these studies, suggestive as they are in general terms, are based on data on how speakers actually react verbally, when confronted with a speaker of another language or dialect, or with a similar communication problem. The question is of direct interest to research in education, for it has been emphasised increasingly often recently, especially in the work of Bernstein for example, that, in a real sense, teachers and pupils may speak different types of language, or at least use different forms of language in comparable contexts. Similarly, Labov (1969, 1970b) discusses the educational problems which result from pupils' use of nonstandard Negro English in the USA.

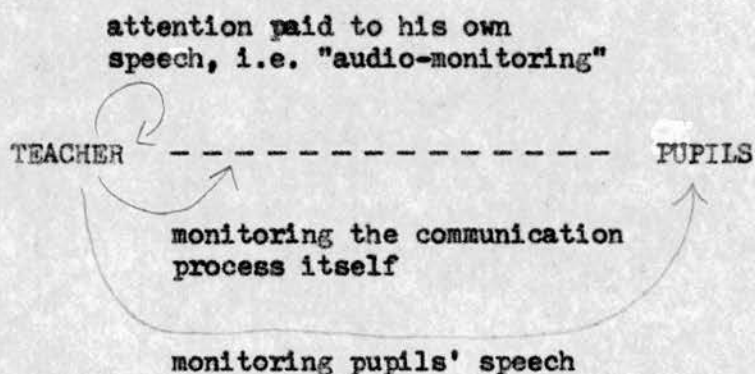


And with specific reference to a British classroom context, Barnes (1969, and see 3.9 below) suggests that teachers' use of a specific register can be a barrier to pupils' learning.

If Holt's characterisation (1.6) of teachers' talk is accurate, the teacher himself is aware that the communication system in the classroom is liable to malfunction. This suggests that one of the first aspects of the communication system to look at is the linguistic means and verbal strategies employed by teachers to keep a check on whether communication is occurring or not. In other words, one should start by investigating language which has a "contact" function. The contact function refers to utterances which serve to check that the channel of communication is itself open and working, and which serve to attract attention and confirm continued attention to one's listeners. This is likely to be a predominant function in any teaching situation, since the teacher will want to know if his pupils are "following", and whether they are all "on the same wavelength". This is an area of speech behaviour where it is useful to look at everyday expressions and metaphors: compare, for example, "to get a message across", "to keep in touch", "to get through to someone", and so on, metaphors which express a "contact" function.

Labov (1966) has proposed that styles of language can be ranged along a single dimension measured by the amount of attention which the speaker pays to his own speech. He refers to this as "audio-monitoring" (cf 2.1.1). But it should also be possible to range speech situations along a dimension of attention paid to the speech of other participants in the situation, and to the communication process itself. For the reasons I have just proposed, teaching situations are likely to show very high amounts of attention paid by speakers

both to their own speech and to the speech of pupils. An aspect of the communication situation can therefore be schematically represented as follows. The situation is considered only from the point of view of the teacher.



This representation is purely illustrative. Clearly such diagrammatic arrows explain nothing. One of my main aims in this study is to discover the verbal strategies which constitute the monitoring.

2.5. METACOMMUNICATION

How then can Hymes' concepts of speech functions be developed to describe this type of monitoring behaviour in the classroom?

Hymes shows that, among the many functions that language in use may serve in different situations, it may do the work of focussing back on language itself: on form, on meaning, or on some aspect of the communication situation. According to Hymes' analysis, language with a "metalinguistic" function focusses on the underlying code or meaning of language. A speaker might point to the meaning of language used by, for example, saying "go and look it up in the dictionary". Language with a "contact" function focusses on the channels of communication, as when a speaker says: "can you hear me?" And

language with a "poetic" function focusses on the message form. This function is indicated by "what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed". These are Hymes' (1962) examples.³⁰ Hymes is therefore discussing various ways in which speakers refer to talk in the course of talk.

As I have emphasised already, Hymes himself, and others using his concepts of speech functions, have worked almost exclusively at the level of cultural patterns of speech behaviour, and have not used the concepts to analyse specific interactions observed and recorded in their specific social context. Although the concepts are suggestive when applied to specific interactions, they dissolve into a wide range of different but related conversational strategies. I will demonstrate this in detail below, in chapters 5 to 8 especially, with reference to specific tape-recorded data on teachers' talk.

Another aspect of language in use which Hymes (1962) only hints at, without exploring systematically, is the network of relations between different speech functions. It is clear initially that checks or controls on meanings, on message-form and on the channels of communication, are closely connected. They all involve communication about features of the communication itself. I therefore

³⁰ I retain these examples as they are Hymes' own illustrations. Nevertheless I find them needlessly confusing. For example, "go and look it up in the dictionary" certainly has the function of focussing attention on meaning. But an equally important function is directive: it requests action. More importantly, "what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed" has the function of focussing on message form: but it focusses on the form of another example of language-use. An expression such as "drinka pinta milka day" focusses on its own linguistic form. In his discussion (1962:117) Hymes is careful to say that his examples of utterances "point to" the functions he discusses, rather than to ~~say~~ they serve those functions. But some of his examples do both. Part of the problem may simply be that Hymes has to choose examples whose point is clear even out of conversational context.

propose to regroup the contact, metalinguistic and poetic functions, under the label of "metacommunication": they are all communication about communication.³¹

I use the term metacommunication, then, to refer to verbal monitoring of the speech situation. Such a definition turns out to be rather wide. Initially metacommunication seems to include: messages about the channels of communication, such as whether they are open or working; messages which function to open, prolong or close communication; messages which serve to keep communication ticking over smoothly or maintain the balance of the communication system; control over who speaks and how much; cues for speakers to stop talking or to interrupt, including therefore cues for "turn-taking"; checks on whether messages have been received and understood; control over the content of communication; and comment on the actual language used in transmitting messages. The initial definition is therefore wide, but the idea which groups all the functions of utterances listed is that they all serve to organise the communication itself.

Paradigm examples of utterances with a pure metacommunicative function of checking and oiling the communication channels themselves, are found in situations in which speakers cannot see each other and therefore have no normal visual feedback. Typical hypothetical

³¹ Hymes (personal communication, May 1973) has granted my collapsing "metalinguistic" and "contact" functions in this way. But he maintains that "poetic" function does not fit here. Whilst it is clear that poetic function covers functions of language which I will not be discussing, it is nevertheless not clear where poetic function does fit. As I have already pointed out (note 29 to this chapter), Hymes' own definition of poetic function is extremely wide.

examples are: "hello! can you hear me? oh, you're still there, I thought you'd hung up."; "come in Z-Victor-One! do you read me?"; "Roger! out!". These examples refer to the physical communication channels, in this instance, telephone and radio. But in addition, many metacommunicative metaphors in use in everyday English, refer to checks that the meaning of an utterance has been correctly conveyed: "I couldn't get through to him", "I managed to get the message across", "do you follow me?", "we don't seem to be on the same wavelength", "I'm sure he didn't mean what he said", "he never says what he means." It is often useful to look at common idioms connected with speech and communication. In this case they illustrate that the speech functions that I am discussing under the label of metacommunication are functions which language is commonly felt to have by its speakers, and not merely constructions imposed by the analyst.

A particular kind of metacommunication is metalanguage: language about language, or language which refers to itself.³² Once more this is not a concept that has been dreamed up entirely by academic linguists. Lefebvre (1966:101) has pointed this out:

"(La) théorie de Jakobson . . . dé-dramatise la question du métalangage. Elle le 'déphilosophise' si l'on peut le dire . . ."

The reference is to Jakobson 1960:

" . . . metalanguage is not only a necessary scientific tool utilised by logicians and linguists; it also plays an important role in our everyday language . . . we practice metalanguage without realising the metalingual character of our operations . . ."

³² Note that my use of the term "metalinguistic" does not correspond with Hymes' (1962). To keep the terminology consistent, I prefer to use the term "metalanguage" for language which is focussed on language-form. This makes the term parallel with my use of "metacommunication" - as communication about communication.

Consider some more commonly heard expressions: "how dare you talk to me like that!"; "she said it with such feeling"; "he likes nothing better than to hear the sound of his own voice"; "he always knows what to leave unsaid"; "who are you to talk!"; "who do you think you're talking to!"; "don't use that tone of voice with me!". All these expressions draw attention to the form of language used, to the constant gap between what is said and what is meant, and therefore to the constant need to do interpretive work on speech. These examples clearly do not have a purely metacommunicative function however.

Metacommunication is therefore a useful general concept which brings together otherwise disparate facts which have begun to accumulate about how conversations are routinely accomplished in orderly fashion.

The notion of metacommunication is close to Goffman's (1964) concept, already quoted, of a social situation as being "an environment of mutual monitoring possibilities": people are constantly monitoring each others' behaviour, interpreting it, "reading between the lines", and so on. He discusses, in general terms, the procedural rules which initiate and terminate talk, guide messages and change topics:

"Encounters are organised by means of communications about communications". (1963:99)

Again in very general terms, he discusses how speakers in a conversation are obliged to demonstrate their involvement in that conversation, as they take part in it. They must not only take part, but show that they are taking part (Goffman 1957). Goffman is vague however about what people actually do in order to carry out such monitoring. He fails to provide any data on what speakers do in

order to "bring off" successfully organised conversation. I try in this study to break up the notions of speech functions into specific kinds of speech acts, in order to show some of the verbal strategies which speakers use for "keeping in touch" with other speakers.

A larger amount of observational research has in fact been done on the nonverbal communication which serves metacommunicative functions such as turn-taking. Argyle and Dean (1965) discuss how eye-gaze signals feedback on how talk is received. Kendon (1967) similarly discusses the function of gaze-direction in offering the floor, changing speakers, making smooth changeovers, and signalling attention and agreement. Birdwhistell (1970) shows how eyebrow movements are used to similar effect, and mentions (in Sebeok *et al* eds. 1964) how a member of a group round a table may bid for the floor and for the chairman's attention by so subtle a cue as tightening the muscles of one buttock so as to alter the orientation of his body.

An odd feature of some of the nonverbal communication studies is that they often take no account of the function of speech itself in regulating the encounter. For example, one obvious way to switch speakers, i.e. a turn-taking mechanism, is to ask a question. Conversation can clearly be regulated by linguistic cues alone - otherwise talk over the telephone or between blind people would be impossible, and it would be difficult to follow group discussions on the radio. It is of course difficult to follow tape-recorded discussion when this originally did depend for its accomplishment partly on nonverbal signals.

I will show that an interesting feature of teacher-pupil talk is that, to a much greater extent than many other speech events, it is organised by peculiarly explicit metatalk. In this study I deal only

with verbal metacommunication, and suggest ways of systematically investigating how different aspects of conversational order are accomplished through talk.

2.5.1. Related concepts: "expositives" and "formulating"

It would be appropriate at this point to mention briefly other concepts which are closely related to the concept of metacommunication, and which I discovered after I had developed this concept to deal specifically with tape-recorded teacher-talk. Apart from the reasons summarised above, the concept seems important, since it has been proposed apparently independently by various researchers. Notably, Austin (1955) talks of "expositives" which "refer to the conversational interchange"; and Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) talk of "formulating a conversation as a feature of that conversation".

Other researchers have used similar concepts. Birdwhistell (1973: 233), some of whose observations on the organisation of interaction I have just quoted, proposes the term "metaint^cerational" to refer to features of behaviour which provide a "running comment" to participants about the interaction, and which serve, for example, functions of marking segments of interaction. Ruesch and Kees (1956) use the term "metacommunicative" in a way comparable to my use of the term, but without exploring the communication features used to carry out such functions. (The book comprises mainly a brilliant collection of photographs illustrating messages conveyed by nonverbal behaviour and by the layout of the physical environment.) Goffman (passim, but especially 1957) discusses how interactants are expected to give off cues to indicate their involvement in the interaction as well as

"merely" transmitting messages. (I have already suggested a parallel with Goffman's concept of "mutual monitoring".)

I will briefly summarize the kind of phenomena pointed out by Austin and by Garfinkel and Sacks.

Austin (1955:99) discusses the concept of illocutionary acts, i.e. the "performance of an act in saying something". He identifies a subclass of such acts, "expositives", which do the work of

"(making) plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation, or, in general, are expository." (p.151)

This notion is clearly related to the notion of metacommunicative speech acts, which, among other functions, point to the structure of the discourse in which they occur. Austin points out that expositives are enormously numerous. He gives various examples, including "I turn next to . . . ", "I cite . . . ", "I repeat that . . . " (p.160). He says:

"An enormous number . . . seem naturally to refer to conversational interchange . . . and all, of course, have reference to the communicational situation. . . . the expositive is the clarifying of reasons, arguments and communications."

Austin apparently sees the primary function of expositives as "clarifying", i.e. as (in Garfinkel and Sacks' terms) attempting to remedy, repair or clean up the trouble caused by ambiguous speech.

I will not further discuss Austin's work, as I am only concerned here to point out his use of the concept of expositives.³³ I will now similarly summarise some of Garfinkel and Sacks' points.

³³ Neither I am concerned here with the extent to which Austin was himself aware of various inadequacies in his analysis of performatives and illocutionary acts. For contrasting views on this see Black 1963 and Ferguson 1966.

Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) point out that a speaker may treat some part of a conversation as an occasion to describe that conversation, characterise it, explicate it, summarise it, etc. As examples, they give: (p.350)

"Now, let me ask you this . . . "

"You asked me didn't you? Well, I just told you."

They further point out (p.353) that speakers formulate "routinely and on a massive scale", but that formulating is often taken as incongruous, incompetent, boring, devious, joking, being obstinate, etc. (p.354-5). In connection with reasons for formulating, they propose that speakers formulate in order to remedy ambiguity and indexicality (p.353). One of their main points is however that formulations cannot, in principle, repair the essential incompleteness of talk; i.e. formulating exhibits speakers' orientations to the fact that conversation is accountably rational, but formulating is not the definitive way by which conversation is ordered (p.355). I discuss this further below in 8.1.

Garfinkel and Sacks do not discuss how or when formulating may be appropriate or not; nor what things speakers may be doing by formulating apart from attempting to remedy indexicality. I have begun in this chapter to account for who can formulate and when, by proposing that it is a characteristic and recognisable feature of teacher-talk. One constraint on its use is therefore situation: in various academic situations (e.g. school teaching, writing scholarly articles³⁴) formulating is appropriate. I will also propose other

³⁴ Garfinkel and Sacks' own style in their paper exhibits many examples of formulating, e.g. (formulations are in brackets):

reasons why it is done: not only to remedy indexicality, but also to keep conversational control. Another possible function of formulating, suggested by my more recent study of industrial negotiations (not reported here) is that of displaying that that speaker is concerned with ordering and clarifying his talk, i.e. a speaker may overstructure his talk, not just in order to make himself clear to his audience, but to show his audience that he is deliberately orienting to the business of making himself clear. (Cf 6.3 for development of this point.)

2.6. SUMMARY

I began this chapter by discussing a general approach to social interaction which regards social behaviour as consisting of face-to-face episodes or encounters, whose essential characteristic is that people constantly monitor and interpret each others' behaviour. I then discussed aspects of the approach to social interaction proposed by Hymes: the ethnography of communication. This approach analyses social interaction into speech situations and speech events, which are essentially similar to the type of rule-governed "episodes" discussed by Harré and Secord. I discussed other associated concepts proposed within the ethnography of communication: particularly the

(We offer the observation that) persons . . .
(In sum), the mastery of natural language . . .
(We call attention to the phenomenon that) . . .
(We refer to) this procedural policy (as) 'ethnomethodological indifference' . . .
(We begin with observations) about these phenomena . . .
(A final remark about brackets:) their use reminds us that . . .
(We are not saying that) it is a specific trouble . . .

The function of formulating seems fairly straightforward in these examples: emphatic, underlining, pointing to the structure of the argument, and trying to be explicit.

concept of the functional diversity of language in use. And I showed that some of the speech functions proposed by Hymes have to do with monitoring the discourse and the social encounter of which they are a part. Finally, I proposed, and began to develop, a concept of "metacommunication", which regroups the concepts of monitoring and certain speech functions, and begins to characterise an aspect of teaching as a speech event.

This chapter aimed then at setting out various concepts which I will develop in chapters 5 to 8 with reference to tape-recorded and observational data. Chapter 4 will take up the methodological problems associated with the type of study of speech events which I have proposed. But first, chapter 3 will now provide a more straightforward review of the studies in the substantive area of classroom language.

CHAPTER 3

STUDIES OF LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

The last chapter was concerned with aspects of the theory of social interaction. I now move onto a discussion of studies in the substantive area of classroom language. Note however that any division of this kind is based on convenience rather than on any real theoretical distinction. For, as I have already argued, any sociolinguistic theory will ultimately stand or fall on its success in analysing what speakers actually say to each other in concrete social situations - such as the classroom.

I start with some comments on primarily educational studies of classroom language, and move onto studies which use the classroom explicitly as a focus for developing sociolinguistic theory.¹

3.1. LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

The first point to be made is that there are now a large number of studies which emphasise the importance of language in education, and the complexity of the relationship between linguistic skills and educational success. The best-known British work in this area is by Bernstein (passim) who has developed a complex theory relating the different ways in which different social groups tend to use language in different contexts, with the linguistic demands made upon pupils by

¹ For another review of some of this literature see Forsyth 1971, now published in Sinclair et al 1972.

the education system. In a recent formulation of a theory which has developed over the past fifteen years², Bernstein (1972) argues that middle- and working-class children differ in the contexts in which they tend to use "particularistic" and "universalistic" language, and that this causes difficulties for working class children in an educational system which puts a premium on the ability to use "universalistic" forms of language in a wide range of situations. Other work on aspects of this topic, or work which draws on, summarises and develops Bernstein's analysis in various ways includes Creber 1972, Flower 1966, Lawton 1968, and the papers in Bernstein ed. 1973.

In the USA, Labov (1969, 1970b) has also recently published important work on language and education, and has taken as his major aim to dispel what he calls the "myth of linguistic deprivation" (see Labov 1969). Hymes (1971b, 1972a) and several of the articles in Cazden et al eds. 1973 argue a similar line. It would be possible to cite a considerably larger amount of work in this field: see for example, the Open University Course on "Language and Learning" and the reader (Cashdan & Grugeon eds. 1972) on which the course is based.

However, despite a large amount of work in the "language and education" area, very little of it is based on empirical, observational studies of language-use in the classroom. In chapter 1, I pointed out very briefly, how educational research in general has tended to depend on questionnaire and testing techniques, and how, paradoxically, it has neglected the direct study of teachers and learners in their everyday settings. In a comparable (but not entirely parallel) way, socio-

² For an analysis of ways in which Bernstein's position has altered, see Coulthard 1972.

linguistic research on language and education has tended to favour experimental and questionnaire studies with associated high-level theory (Bernstein passim), or programmatic statements based on sociolinguistic theory (Hymes, e.g. 1962, 1972c), or inferences from sociolinguistic field work in other social contexts (Labov 1969, Gumperz & Hernandez-Chavez 1972, Kochman 1972) - and, again, has neglected direct recording, observation and analysis of language in the classroom.

Labov himself points to this gap in research. His short book The Study of Nonstandard English (1970), despite its misleading title, is mainly a summary of some sociolinguistic principles, and an argument for sociolinguistic research based on observation and analysis of linguistic behaviour in its social setting. He points out (p.42) that the teaching process itself has not yet been studied sociolinguistically, that we need direct observation of the teaching process, and analysis of the vocabulary of instruction, and that the most important kinds of research will be done during teaching (p.68).

The recent book Functions of Language in the Classroom, edited by Cazden, John and Hymes (1972), provides much useful background material to studies of classroom language. There are papers on many aspects of language and education, including: the importance of attitudes to nonstandard language in the education system; and educational problems of bilingual and deaf children. There is a useful general emphasis on the all-pervasiveness of sociolinguistic values and culturally learned modes of interpretation. But only one paper (by Mishler, discussed in 3.6 below) analyses tape-recorded teacher-pupil talk. (See Stubbs 1974a, in Appendix D, for a review of this book.)

Note that some of the more recent participant observation studies of classroom life in general, often provide interesting, although

unsystematic comments on classroom language. Such studies can be valuable for suggesting to the sociolinguist researcher potentially fruitful areas of study. See for example John Holt's work (1964, 1967), already quoted in chapter 1, for many examples of teacher-pupil exchanges; Kohl (1967) for interesting comments on Negro children's linguistic performance in school; Jackson's (1968) emphasis on the routine nature of classroom dialogue (I discuss Jackson's work briefly below in 7.4); Hamilton (1973, forthcoming) on the way in which contradictory messages may be conveyed by a teacher's language, and by institutionalised teaching methods and teaching materials; and Walker & Adelman (1972, forthcoming) on how meanings may develop in the classroom culture over long periods of time.

3.2. SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION OF VERBAL INTERACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

A large amount of (primarily American) educational research on "verbal interaction in the classroom", has however been based on observation of teachers and pupils in the classroom setting. This is the work based on "systematic observation schedules" of which the best-known has been developed by Ned Flanders (1966, 1970). This style of work has been very adequately reviewed in many comprehensive articles over the past ten years. (See Biddle 1967, Gallagher 1970, Kliebard 1966, Medley & Mitzel 1963, Nuthall 1968, Weick 1968, Withall & Lewis 1963.) The use of interaction analysis in Britain is surveyed by Wragg (1971). The most recent critical British reviews of this literature are Adelman & Walker 1974, Delamont 1973³, Delamont &

³ Delamont 1973 is probably the most comprehensive recent discussion of Flanders' technique. Delamont uses Flanders' coding schedule,

Hamilton forthcoming, Walker 1971, 1972. For other critiques of Flanders' system, see Silbermann 1970:455ff, Mitchell 1969:704-710.

In chapter 7, I discuss the status of Flanders' coding scheme in some detail, so at this point I will simply summarise a few points about this style of work. A classroom observer using Flanders' system (or any one of seventy-nine comparable published systems, reviewed in Simon & Boyer 1967, 1970) sits in the classroom with a prepared "coding schedule" which specifies different "categories" of teacher and pupil speech behaviour. (Flanders' own schedule is reproduced in 7.2 below.) He then "codes" teacher and pupil utterances on a time-sampling basis, say every three seconds, to provide data in a suitable form for statistical analysis.

Note then that tape-recording is not generally employed, and that the actual language used by teachers and pupils is therefore often irretrievably lost. The idea behind such research is to obtain a general measure of "classroom climate" or "atmosphere", rather than to analyse the structure of discourse.

I will merely list some of the criticisms of Flanders-type research when viewed from the point of view of sociolinguistics. Note that this is to attack Flanders from a direction with which he is not primarily concerned; he himself views his method primarily as a tool

but also combines this with unstructured observation methods, as well as data collected by interview and questionnaire methods. See also Delamont forthcoming. Delamont & Hamilton, forthcoming, provides a useful summary discussion of several problems with Flanders' system as a research tool; its neglect of social and physical context; its ability to deal only with observables; its neglect of qualitative factors in favour of what is easily measurable; its fragmentary focus on small bits of interaction; its pre-specified categories which allow no adaption or development; its placing of reliability before relevance; its inability to deal with any concept other than the "average" classroom.

for teacher-training. This is not to say however that a more theoretically adequate account of teaching would not be a more adequate training tool. (Cf 10.2.1 below.) At this point then I will simply list the type of criticism which can be made of this style of work for my purposes, and take up these points again later in detail with respect to my own analysis of teacher-talk.

First, there is no study whatsoever of how hearers (i.e. pupils, teachers, and researchers) interpret classroom talk: coders are expected to be able to do this unproblematically. (Cf 2.1 above where I discussed the problem of "interpretation" in general terms, and also especially 8.2 below.) Thus the data for study are not in fact classroom language at all, but the researcher's codings of it. Another way of putting this is to say that in Flanders-style research the actual language used in the classroom is irretrievable. (For radical criticisms of "coding" social behaviour as such, see Garfinkel 1967, Cicourel 1964, Coulter 1970, 1971.)

Second, since Flanders' coding schedule demands that classroom talk be coded on an arbitrary time-sampling basis, the method precludes any study of discourse structure which the talk itself displays; i.e. it is impossible to study by this method the structure and organisation which the speakers themselves give to the teaching situation. (See especially 7.3 below.)

Finally, Flanders' coding scheme and findings neither draw on, nor are they linked to, any more general concepts of sociolinguistics or of social interaction theory. Although a huge number of studies have been done in the Flanders tradition, this work is strangely isolated

from other attempts to study social behaviour⁴ and thus is difficult to interpret as a contribution to the understanding of social behaviour. This is a specific example of the point I made in the introductory paragraph to chapter 2 above about work in social interaction suffering from a surfeit of unrelated "facts" and "findings". (See also 7.2 below.)

3.3. ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

Work on classroom language which analyses transcripts and tape-recordings of lessons can therefore be quickly listed. Barnes (1969) provides intuitive commentaries on fragments of secondary school lessons. Gumperz & Herasimchuk (1972) and Mishler (1972), strongly influenced by ethnomethodological work on conversation, analyse social meanings and cognitive strategies displayed in classroom talk. Bellack et al (1966) and Sinclair et al (1972) are primarily concerned with the underlying structural organisation of classroom discourse. Apart from Barnes 1969, these studies became available only when the present study was well underway.⁵

⁴ The style of research involving "coding" interaction is of course modelled closely on Bales' method of studying small group dynamics. See, e.g., Bales 1953. But this method of studying groups, although widely used, is only one narrow method of studying people's social behaviour.

⁵ An important ethnomethodological account of classroom talk promises to be Cicourel et al forthcoming, which I have not been able to study. There are brief references to this work in Cicourel 1973:142ff.

Two other recent British works which include interesting discursive commentary on teacher-pupil interaction are Stratta et al 1973 and Rosen & Rosen 1973. These studies were likewise published after the present study was largely written. I do not discuss them here merely for reasons of space.

I will comment briefly on these studies, noting primarily their immediate relevance to or differences from my own approach.

3.4. BARNES (1969) "LANGUAGE IN THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM"

Barnes sets out to study the effect of teachers' language on pupils, and particularly the function of subject-specific "registers" as a possible barrier to learning. He is especially concerned with difficulties met by pupils as they move from primary to secondary school.

The work consists of intuitive commentaries on extracts from tape-recordings of a whole day's lessons of a first year class in a comprehensive school. Despite the unsystematic nature of the research, it is valuable for the way it emphasises the social functions of the "register of secondary school education", as Barnes terms it. Two of Barnes' main conclusions are (a) that teachers are preoccupied with teaching terminology as an end in itself, and (b) that such terminology has not merely an academic function, e.g. of allowing precision in discussion of a subject, but that teachers use specialist terms to help themselves perceive their subject, and that terminology therefore serves a sociocultural function of maintaining the teachers' definition of the situation.

This is partly my formulation of Barnes' conclusions; one of my main topics below will be the way in which teacher-talk focusses very specifically on language itself, how this talk sustains a view of what "teaching" consists of, and that the use of such language inevitably conveys evaluatively loaded messages. Barnes expresses it thus:

"From the point of view of the teacher, everything he says has for him a more or less important sociocultural function

in supporting his rôle as teacher and as teacher-of-(his particular subject)". (p.58)

Barnes also sets up a coding scheme of different types of teacher-question (which he admits however, on p.21, is not able to be used by other researchers, due to dispute over the vagueness of the categories). His most useful insight on this topic is probably that most teachers' questions are not requests for information, but "pseudo-questions", i.e. questions designed to test the pupils' knowledge. He briefly discusses the repercussions this has on the possibility of genuine discussion in the classroom. (Labov (1970b) has also pointed out that teachers' questions are typically requests for proof of knowledge, or requests for display of knowledge. Other questions may serve simply to test attention.)

3.5. GUMPERZ & HERASIMCHUK (1972) "THE CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEANING: A STUDY OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION"

Gumperz & Herasimchuk's paper is based on a commentary on two tape-recorded lessons, chosen so as to be maximally different: an older child teaching a younger child (aged 6 and 5), and a teacher teaching a group. The paper is heavily influenced by recent work on conversational analysis by the ethnomethodologists. The stated aim is,

"to work out an empirical method of conversational analysis, capable of recovering the social assumptions which underlie the verbal communication process by focussing on actors' use of speech to interact."

The paper reproduces and comments on extracts from verbatim transcripts of tape-recorded talk, and uses these to search for the linguistic signs which convey social meanings. The authors isolate different strategies employed by the adult and child teacher, and conclude (I

think prematurely) that adults and children differ in their definition of the teaching task and of the social relationships involved.

The adult teacher relies heavily on interrogatives to elicit answers from pupils, and makes use of lexical and rhetorical variation, with a corresponding lack of variety in intonation. The child teacher makes more use of intonational variety, and repetition, especially to distinguish questions, challenges and confirmations, and to maintain an extraordinary degree of musical and rhythmical relatedness with the pupil.

Note that although Gumperz & Herasimchuk do succeed in showing how adult and child teachers use different means of communication, this does not show that they are necessarily doing different things, i.e. performing different linguistic functions within a different conception of teaching (as the authors claim). One of my main topics below will be what teachers are doing by talking to their pupils in the way they do. (For a direct discussion of pupils' conceptions of teaching as a speech activity see chapter 9 below.) The authors do also successfully demonstrate that the messages are being transmitted in ways which would not be revealed by traditional grammatical analysis, but rather by sequential ordering of utterances, code switching, and paralinguistic cues.

3.6. MISHLER (1972) "IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHER STRATEGIES FOR LANGUAGE AND COGNITION"

Mishler's paper is similar in style to Gumperz and Herasimchuk's paper. He argues first of all that studies of language in use must present data in a form which is open to reanalysis by the reader: a

minimal requirement for this is verbatim transcripts of tape-recorded talk. Compare on this, my comments above on Flanders-type studies, in which the language used is totally irretrievable, having been coded in real time by the observer on the spot.⁶ Sinclair *et al* 1972 is the only report on classroom language to reproduce a sizeable amount of teacher-pupil talk.

Mishler's aim is to specify how a teacher's cognitive strategies are displayed (or betrayed?) in sequences of his talk, and thus how a teacher "constructs a world" by his talk.⁷ His aim is to specify features of language which indicate different teaching strategies and thus direct attention to different forms of order in the world. He illustrates, with reference to reproduced extracts of brief interchanges, how a teacher's talk provides highly specific ways of cognizing the world.

For example, a teacher's use of open-ended questions may imply the general pedagogic message that different answers are acceptable: not a taken-for-granted assumption in all teaching situations. In a more complex example, he shows how a teacher's shift from singulars to plurals indicates to pupils a generalisation that the teacher wishes to put across. Mishler gives other examples of the detailed ways in which a teacher may: take pupils' answers into account in asking more questions; select actual words or meanings as a focus of

⁶ Note that this comment of Mishler's provides a condemnation of almost all the other papers in Cazden *et al*, eds., 1972; alongside which it is reproduced. Cf also 4.1 below where I discuss the importance of giving the reader access to transcribed data, in a field of study where there are no widely-accepted methods of data-collection and analysis.

⁷ Torode 1972, forthcoming, expresses his aim in a comparable way. See below, 3.7.

attention⁸; and make different use of pronouns ("we" versus "you") as indicators of how much responsibility he shares with the class in confirming norms of behaviour.

Mishler's analysis is clearly fragmentary; but one of its main values is the illustration of how general teaching strategies are displayed in the fine grain of a teacher's use of language, and in its insistence that the understanding of language functions can only come from an analysis of what is actually said.

3.7. TORODE (1972) "TEACHERS' TALK"

Torode's (1972, forthcoming, and other unpublished work) papers on the analysis of classroom language are based, not on tape-recordings, but on field notes made during long-term participant observation with a secondary school class. His analysis focusses on the details of particular teacher and pupil remarks and exchanges, noted down verbatim at the time. Torode is mainly concerned to develop an ethnomethodological or phenomenological sociological approach (and more recently a Heideggerian approach) to social action and ordinary language usage. He deliberately overanalyses very small fragments of spoken interaction, as a method of (a) showing how a teacher's world view is displayed in the details of his language-use, e.g. in his systematic use of pronouns (cf Mishler above), and (b) developing very high level theory concerning the nature of an appropriate description of social interaction.

Torode (forthcoming) discusses, for example, some of the subtle

⁸ This will be one of my main topics below, in chapters 5 and 6.

and complex ways in which classroom discipline may, or may not, be maintained by a teacher's choice of words. He compares two teachers, one who successfully deals with challenges from his pupils and one who does not; and discusses how breakdowns in discipline are visible in the detailed ways in which teachers use language to respond to pupils and to explain their own actions in the classroom. He notes, for example, that the successful disciplinarian accounts for and explains his orders to pupils, to forestall or answer challenges from pupils. The teacher who has discipline problems offers no explanation to make sense of his commands. Torode's analysis is closely based in the actual language which the two teachers use: in their formulations of explanations and their systematic, but nonliteral, use of different pronouns.

3.8. BELLACK ET AL (1966) THE LANGUAGE OF THE CLASSROOM

Bellack et al emphasise the complexity of classroom events (cf 1.5 above), but argue that teacher-pupil dialogue has characteristic underlying structure and pattern which teachers and pupils follow with remarkably little deviation. Their analysis is based on the coding of transcribed audio-recordings of sixty school classes.

They start from Wittgenstein's notion of a "language game" in which speakers follow rules or conventions and learn to participate appropriately. The main point of this analysis is the emphasis on the overall structural organisation of the lesson as a speech event. Bellack et al propose four pedagogical moves as basic units of discourse: structuring, soliciting, responding, and reacting. These moves are analysed as building up into recursive teaching cycles. The

aim is thus to describe patterned processes, and hence the system of expectations, in the verbal interaction of teaching.

In the context of the present study, the notion of moves and cycles can best be compared with concepts developed by Sinclair et al (see 3.9 below) and in my own discussion of recursive cycles of teacher-pupil interaction (in 6.2 below).

Bellack et al propose also four categories of meaning: substantive, substantive-logical, instructional, and instructional-logical. This type of notion is essentially similar to Hymes' concepts of speech functions, discussed above (in 2.3.3).

In general, the useful emphasis which Bellack et al place on the overall structuring of the interaction is a major theme in the present study.

3.9. SINCLAIR ET AL (1972) THE ENGLISH USED BY TEACHERS AND PUPILS⁹

Note that much of the work already discussed, by Barnes, Gumperz and Herasimchuk, Mishler and Torode, in varying degrees, confines itself to a commentary and analysis of fragments or extracts of teacher-pupil exchanges. There is no attempt to provide an overall structural description of teaching as a speech event or as a speech situation.

⁹ This report itself was published after most of the concepts in the present study had been developed. On the other hand, previous working papers from the same project had been of great help to my work (Forsyth 1971, Coulthard et al 1972). And the report itself helped to sharpen several ideas for me. As is typical of much work on direct observation of classroom interaction at present, the report and working papers are not yet formally published, but available only in mimeographed form. Cf references to work on classroom interaction in 1.1. A revised version of this report is to be published by OUP in 1974. I am grateful to the authors, with whom I am now working, for many useful discussions about this work.

The analysis is at a different (but not necessarily prior) level. In Sinclair et al (as in Bellack et al), the express aim is, on the contrary, to provide a structural description capable of giving coverage to whole lessons.¹⁰

The work by Sinclair et al is more comparable to the present study than the other work on classroom language already reviewed in this chapter, in the way it explicitly tries to bridge the gap between educational and sociolinguistic studies of language-use in the classroom. I will therefore conclude my discussion of various approaches to studying social interaction, by briefly discussing this report.

The report begins with a useful, if rather uncritical, overview of work on verbal interaction from linguistics, philosophy, sociology, psychology and psychiatry, and educational studies of language interaction in the classroom. A coding scheme is then proposed for analysing transcripts of tape-recordings of teacher-pupil talk. The coding is used as a basis for analysing various types of sequential ordering in teacher-pupil talk, the aim being to analyse the structure of characteristic teacher-pupil exchanges.

The analysis proposed for the sequential organisation of classroom discourse is based on a Hallidayan model of a rank scale. Five ranks are proposed at the level of discourse: lesson, transaction, exchange, move and act. Units at each rank are composed of one or more units at the next lower rank, the act being the minimal unit at discourse level.

The main conclusion about the structure of teacher-pupil discourse

¹⁰ John Sinclair (personal communication) now states as one premise for assessing the validity of any proposed linguistic description that it should give total coverage of the data. I do not entirely subscribe to this view; cf my comments on the proposed coding scheme below, 6.1.

is that it is based on a recursive three-part exchange:

teacher: initiation (e.g. eliciting question)
pupil: response
teacher: feedback (i.e. evaluation or acceptance)

The status of this underlying three-part, I-R-F sequence or exchange structure is not explicitly discussed in the report. But it clearly represents an aspect of the tacit knowledge about sequential ordering in discourse, which hearers (pupils, teachers and researchers) bring to their interpretation of teacher-pupil talk.

I will further discuss here only two aspects of the report which are particularly relevant to the present study: the important, and almost unique, emphasis on how classroom discourse is organised, and the types of social knowledge brought to bear on interpreting teacher-pupil interaction. My points on both aspects will be, not that I disagree with the position argued in the report, but that the argument stops short at interesting points.

Sinclair et al emphasise, correctly, that previous studies of language in the classroom have often failed to look at how talk is organised at discourse level. Throughout the report, the point is repeatedly made that teacher-pupil talk appears particularly well organised, compared with other speech events, because, although there are many speakers involved, there are only two speaker rôles, and one speaker is almost entirely in control; and that teachers typically organise classroom talk by, in a sense, standing outside it and passing comments on it. (See pp. 73, 90, 96.)

But there are two points to be made about the report's analysis of how teachers use talk to organise talk. First, a teacher's use of talk-organising talk is much more common than Sinclair et al make clear. They provide, in fact, their own good examples of a wide range

of teachers' talk with this function, in their coding scheme: 17 (out of 22) categories have to do with talk which focusses on the structure of the discourse in which it occurs, e.g. by marking boundaries in the discourse, by returning the discourse to a previous stage, by summarising the discourse, by bidding to enter the discourse, and so on. Many of the categories in the coding scheme are therefore closely related, but this is not discussed.

In my own discussion of teacher-pupil talk below, I try first of all to show how a major characteristic of teacher-talk is that it consists largely of talk which serves to order talk; and I propose a way of making explicit links between the categories of such a coding scheme.

In the same connection, the report passes over an interesting reflexive property of such talk-ordering talk, by saying for example,

"These items are not strictly part of the discourse, but rather metastatements on the discourse . . . " (p.73),

and

"Metastatement . . . is not part of the discourse but a commentary on the discourse." (p.90).

But "metastatements" are precisely both comments on the discourse, and a large part of the discourse. I discuss fully below why this kind of reflexive talk is interesting. It both organises and provides an account of that talk. But this relationship itself, between how order in discourse is sustained and reported, is problematic, and not touched on by Sinclair et al. (See further in chapters 6 and 7.)

My second general point is that Sinclair et al leave unclear to what extent discourse analysis should depend on an exploration of the social knowledge which hearers, participants or observers, require to interpret connected discourse. They say (p.36) that they aim to reveal

"rules for interpreting utterances". They make plain (p.36) that they are not directly concerned with researching the general assumptions which underlie interpretation of discourse, but rather with assumptions

"at the level of competence in particular sociolinguistic situations" (p.37),

and hence with how hearers in teaching situations

"use knowledge about schools, classrooms, one particular teacher, one particular lesson, one particular moment in a lesson" (p.82)

in order to interpret teacher-pupil talk. I am not sure if the distinction between general assumptions and assumptions about particular sociolinguistic situations is valid. First, general assumptions will always be drawn upon in situ; and second, the same type of assumptions apply in different speech situations, e.g. assumptions about when particular knowledge about one particular speaker should overrule assumptions about the whole situation. But the report does not attempt to formulate (e.g. as "rules for interpreting") any of this social knowledge about one sociolinguistic situation. The only kind of tacit knowledge which is formulated is knowledge about sequencing rules.

In the present study I try to study aspects of this question more closely: by formulating various interpretive rules of discourse which specify types of social knowledge which are used in making sense of teacher-pupil talk (see chapter 8); by showing the wide range of social knowledge which pupils use to justify interpretations of tape-recorded teacher-pupil talk (see chapter 9); and by arguing, in general, that discourse would not be (heard as) organised if vast amounts of social knowledge were not invoked by hearers in making sense of it. My comments on these two aspects of the report are therefore closely linked: studying how classroom discourse is organised must involve

studying the kinds of social knowledge used to interpret it.

Another way of putting this is to say that, although Sinclair et al raise the question of different types of organisation in discourse, they propose a description of only one type of organisation: namely, sequential and hierarchical ordering of speech acts into larger units. In the present study, I will discuss this type of organisation in only one section (6.2), and will concentrate on other forms of order displayed by classroom talk.

3.10. PRESENTATION VERSUS DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTS

At this point, having completed my main review and discussion of other work in the field, I should perhaps make clear that the way I have presented concepts in chapters 2 and 3 bears little relation to the way in which I came upon and developed these concepts in the course of the research.

For example, I did not originally develop the idea of "monitoring" in teacher-pupil interaction from Harré and Secord's book, which was published long after I had developed the notion as an explanatory concept to deal with tape-recorded data. On the other hand, Harré and Secord's discussion, since it is so explicit, served to sharpen the concept for me, without changing the general argument. I began chapter 2 with a discussion of their work, since, although I disagree with parts of it, it is the most accessible and clear discussion of various central concepts in social interaction. As I developed it during my own work, the concept of "monitoring" came rather from Goffman's (1964) use of the term; from regrouping some of Hymes' categories of "language functions" (as discussed in 2.4, 2.5) and from a suggestion

of Henry Widdowson's (personal communication) that "monitoring" is an essential feature of teaching. Thus the coding scheme which I propose below developed out of Hymes' concepts, and not, for example, out of the type of systematic coding schedule proposed by Flanders and others for describing teacher-pupil talk. However, one major theme below will be that, in various critical respects, the coding scheme, as I develop it from Hymes, is not in principle different from Flanders-type schemas. This will then, in turn, throw light on the status of Hymes' concepts of "language functions". (See especially 8.3.)

In a field where similar ideas have often been developed to different stages in mutual ignorance by differently oriented specialists, it is probably inevitable that a critical presentation of relevant concepts cannot be neatly integrated with a more down-to-earth tale of how the research progressed.¹¹ It seemed clearer to write this study round the concepts, selecting convenient presentations to structure the argument, and to indicate only in passing how I originally (chronologically) came upon these concepts in relation to my own data on teacher-pupil interaction.

¹¹ Cf Pear 1971: "To anyone acquainted with conferences of philologists, linguists, phoneticians, sociologists, psychologists, teachers of speech, experts in dialects and communications, broadcasters, preachers, public relations officers, advertisers, speech pathologists and therapists, the insulation from each other of these specialists is impressive." There is now a severe problem of access to work on social interaction, which, as I have already discussed, is spread thinly across several academic disciplines.

CHAPTER 4

COLLECTING CONVERSATIONAL DATA:

PROBLEMS IN SOCIOLINGUISTIC METHODOLOGY

"Less than twenty years divide us from the time when the study of methods was the reigning passion of American linguistics; yet the status of methodology has fallen so fast and so far that it now lies in that outer, extralinguistic darkness where we have cast speculation on the origin of language and articles about slang." Labov 1972b.

With Labov's recent elegantly written paper (1972b), questions of (socio)linguistic methodology and associated theory of data-collection have regained respectability. In this chapter, I discuss the kinds of issue that Labov raises, with respect to the data on which the present study is based, and discuss some aspects of the theory of data-collection with which Labov does not deal.

Linguists, and social scientists in general are strangely coy about discussing in print the kind of problems that are involved in collecting and analysing data. Either they do not wish to admit that they have problems with basic research tasks (what do I say to my informants? how much data do I need? my thinking is in a rut - how can I generate some new ideas?), or, alternatively, they do not see such basic research tasks (collecting, transcribing, coding and comparing data) as in any way problematic or of interest. In this chapter I try to combine discussion of some aspects of the theory of data-collection in sociolinguistics with discussion of some of the practical day-to-day problems of sociolinguistic research.

4.1. THE LACK OF ACCEPTED PROCEDURES IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Paradoxically, few papers on spoken interaction attempt to analyse and present data on verbal behaviour which has been systematically (in whatever way) collected, recorded or observed in specific, naturally occurring social situations. (I discussed some reasons for this in 2.3.) Consequently, the more problematic aspects of data-collection are rarely discussed. When it is made clear what data do support an analysis, these sometimes turn out to be very far from observed spoken interaction. For example, Hymes' (1966) ethnographic account of three speech events in Wishram Chinook culture is explicitly based on Hymes' reinterpretation of Spier and Sapir's interpretation ("memory ethnography") of events which were not otherwise recorded. Yet it is precisely this problematic relationship between data and analysis via interpretation which should be one central topic of study in sociolinguistics. Hymes is the first to admit and to emphasise that the analyses which he proposes within the "ethnography of communication" are at the level of general cultural patterns of speech behaviour, and not analyses of specific interactions. He is concerned with proposing a general schema or heuristic framework which would be of help to a researcher in the field, rather than with providing a model for analysing data on spoken interaction.¹ But I would propose as a

¹ I have already emphasised this point and given references to Hymes' articles in my discussion of the ethnography of communication in 2.3. For a very explicit statement, cf Hymes, personal communication, April 1972: "Strictly the scheme suggested in my 1962 article is not a model, but a heuristic - an 'etic' framework. . . . It does not provide a table of contents or other categorisation - it helps (the researcher) know what to look for." Cf Darnell, ed., 1972: "Prolegomena to typologies of speech use", which is a framework for the researcher in the field, of the type Hymes refers to.

principle for sociolinguistics that any analysis of speech behaviour will ultimately stand or fall on its success in coming to grips with audio-recordings of what speakers actually say to each other in specific, naturally occurring settings.

When there are few accepted procedures of analysis, as in research on spoken interaction, it is particularly important to keep the reader in clear view of precisely what data the analysis has been based on. Labov (1972b) insists on the "checkability of data" and proposes that more tapes or transcripts should be published. Loman 1967 consists simply of transcripts of conversations in a Negro American dialect, without analysis. Whilst the publication of such raw data is useful, the ideal is the publication of appropriate data plus analysis. Sinclair et al (1972), in their study of classroom language, have also argued for the need to give the reader a clear idea of how the data have been handled when there is no well-defined and established methodology. They publish some sixty pages of coded transcriptions of teacher-pupil talk. I follow a similar procedure in this study, giving extracts of different lengths from transcriptions, as well as field notes, interpreted and analysed in different ways. The linguistic ethnomethodologists have recently been particularly scrupulous, as part of a general theoretical stance, about quoting the (small fragments of) data on which their analyses of conversation are based, and have discussed at length certain aspects of the problematic nature of the relation between such data and theory. (For examples of transcribed conversational data plus analysis, see Sacks 1967-72, Schegloff & Sacks 1973, Schegloff 1968, 1972, Jefferson 1972, 1973, Turner 1971, 1972.)

4.2. TRANSCRIPTION AS A THEORETICAL PURSUIT

However, data-collection/recording and transcription are not themselves mechanical procedures, which can (as is often done) be left unproblematically to a research assistant. Abercrombie (1954) emphasises how even the process of transcribing tape-recordings is problematic, and embodies "an initial classification and even theorising about the raw materials". As a telling anecdote on this theme², Gail Jefferson started as Harvey Sacks' secretary and data recovery technician, transcribing his tape-recordings. She became interested in the interpretive ground rules she developed in order to do "mere" transcription, and now publishes her own papers on conversational analysis (Jefferson 1972, 1973).

Birdwhistell (1970:13) discusses briefly how skilled secretaries who are asked to do close transcriptions of tape-recorded conversation, make about one "mistake" every five words. Unfortunately, Birdwhistell does not make clear precisely what he means by "mistakes", but such data would provide neat secondary evidence concerning how people hear and interpret conversation. In more recent work to that reported here³, I have had practical experience of the disagreements which can arise within a group of linguists working together on the same tape-recorded data, over what constitutes a "correct" transcription at word level. Much more discussion and dispute is normal over such features as intonation, tone-group boundaries and timing of interruptions. (For experimental data on how trained phoneticians using the Trager-Smith

² Quoted by Stanley Raffel, Edinburgh 1973, in lectures.

³ On the SSRC project "The study of verbal interaction in selected situations", English Language Research, University of Birmingham.

system of intonation-transcription use their understanding of the meaning in order to transcribe intonation contours, see Lieberman 1965.) Only someone who has regularly worked with audio-recorded conversational data (i.e. with "good", clear recordings) knows the tricks his ears can play: how whole words can simply not be heard even after repeated listening, how overlaps are similarly not heard, and how one person can sometimes transcribe at first hearing a phrase that a colleague has failed to make sense of after hearing it fifty or a hundred times on a loop-repeater. These are real problems, both practically and theoretically.

A most important point is that much of the complexity of spoken conversation is evident only in close written transcriptions: it is typically not evident to the participants themselves. I am thinking of such frequent conversational complexities as: false starts, hesitations, self-corrections, ungrammatical and unfinished sentences, overlapping utterances, and so on. Conversation looks odd, incoherent and broken when seen in the written medium - but it does not sound odd to those taking part in it. This is not to say that the complexity is an artefact of changing the medium of transmission, but that listeners listen selectively to conversation. They do not hear many of the overlaps, false starts, hesitations, and so on. The presentation of spoken interaction in the form of a transcription has therefore an estrangement effect. We can see that conversation is not so self-evidently coherent as we might have thought. The coherence is achieved through interpretation. The topic is then: how does "sloppy", "incomplete", "incoherent", "defective" talk nevertheless produce an impression of order to its participants? How can we explain that conversation which is evidently (to the eye) full of stops, starts and stammers, never-

theless sounds coherent? A close transcription of spoken conversation can reveal even to the unbeliever ways in which the perceived order of the social world is but an elaborate illusion. Note however that it is possible to stand this formulation of the theoretical importance of "mere" transcription on its head. For a close transcription can reveal types of very detailed conversational order at levels at which conversationalists would never suspect any. Such organisation has been especially the topic of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (in the articles quoted above). (The present study will not discuss such types of very detailed conversational order at any length, but for some remarks on this topic see Stubbs 1973, in Appendix E.)

These problems of how data are preinterpreted by apparently routine research tasks such as transcription, are seen even more acutely with respect to field notes on speech behaviour. The analysis does not begin when the researcher writes about what he has written in the field. In making notes in the field, he is already interpreting, analysing and making choices about what to record and what to miss out. These choices themselves draw upon the communicative competence which is the very topic of study. (The discussion should now have made more explicit the criticism of Hymes 1966 with which I began this chapter.) With reference, for example, to my observational notes on teacher-pupil talk taken in classrooms, which form part of the data for the present study: assuming that I have successfully gathered examples of "typical teacher-talk", what knowledge did I draw on in the classroom to enable me to do this? This knowledge, about how ("good" examples of) teacher-talk can be recognised, is precisely one topic of study. Such notes cannot be treated as a mere resource, to be analysed later in the quiet of my office.

They are already an analysis.

Labov (1970) states the problem as follows:

"There are many acts of perceiving, remembering, selecting interpreting and translating, which lie between the data and the linguist's report, and these are almost all implicit in such papers".⁴

Labov, having remarked ironically (1970:84) that linguistics is

"suffering from difficulty in coming to grips with the fundamental data of language",

provides the most coherent statement in the literature, on theoretical problems of field work and data collection.⁵ I will summarise the principles which Labov proposes, and which are most relevant to the present study, before going on to expand them.

4.3. LABOV ON SOCIOLINGUISTIC METHODOLOGY

Broadly speaking, Labov has done two types of sociolinguistic study: survey-style work on language variation in a speech community, focusing primarily on phonological variables (e.g. Labov 1964, 1966a, 1966b); and, more recently, work on conversational analysis and the organisation of speech events (e.g. 1972a, 1973). But many of his principles apply to both types of study. Labov is concerned with methods of observing speech as social action, and of gathering

⁴ Labov's comment is in the context of some remarks by Garfinkel on coding problems. This theme is developed at length in 8.2ff. below.

⁵ Samarin (1967) does remark pointedly that "linguistic researchers are very silent in print about the field aspects of investigations." Samarin is also useful on very practical problems of fieldwork, from how to keep a card index through to how to stop mould growing on one's tape-recorder in the tropics, and on a few theoretical aspects of data collection for traditional structural analyses of unknown languages or very general ethnographic studies. But he is not concerned with collecting data on conversational interaction.

empirical data to choose between competing theories of language in use. (He does not explicitly deal with ways of generating theory from data, in the sense in which I discuss this in 4.6 below.)

His most important point may simply be his encouragement to other linguists to ignore various self-imposed restrictions on twentieth century linguistics, and to emphasise: that it is possible to observe directly linguistic variation; that speakers' feelings about language are accessible; and that linguistics should use nonlinguistic data to explain linguistic change.

Labov makes clear various principles of sociolinguistic study. These principles are based mainly on the premises that there are no single style speakers, and that speech elicited in any situation of observation will inevitably be more formal than the speaker's most casual style. He gives advice on controlling interview situations to elicit different styles of language from formal to casual. And he proposes supplementing interviews by collecting data from tests, elicitations, experiments, observations and different types of recordings. The most recent and condensed statement of these principles and practical methods is Labov 1972b, which brings together principles developed over the previous empirical studies.

However, in his methodological statements, Labov appears to go back on his own succinctly expressed warning (quoted above) about the indefinite string of interpretations which lie between data and analysis. He argues (1972b:68) for "the possibility of being right" in producing theories of language-use. He puts forward this argument with reference to Popper's principles concerning the nature of scientific explanation. The article ends with the sentence:

"Data from a variety of distinct sources and methods, properly interpreted, can be used to converge on right answers to hard questions." (My emphases.)

Labov is clearly arguing for a "God's truth" view that language, as a system in use, has a structure that is "out there"; the linguist has to work it out.⁶ He is implicitly opposing the "hocus-pocus" view that the structure is, at least partly, a product of the linguist's interpretive analysis. (Hockett 1948.) But Labov is contradicting himself by talking within one sentence of "interpretations" and of "right" answers, since to emphasise the interpretive work on which the analysis depends, is to emphasise that the analysis is essentially and unavoidably a researcher's construction. He is, in any case, misrepresenting Popper, who argues for the relativity of basic statements in science, and that we can never know if we are "right":

"Theories are . . . never empirically verifiable. . . . The empirical basis of objective science has nothing 'absolute' about it. Science does not rest upon solid bedrock. The bold structure of its theories rises, as it were, above a swamp." (Popper 1959:40, 111. Emphasis in original. Labov's references are also to Popper 1959.)

Given how adamant Popper is on this question, it is perverse of Labov to quote him in support of his arguments.⁷

There are certain other problems concerned with the theory of data-collection in sociolinguistics, which Labov does not discuss in

⁶ For an equally extreme God's truth statement, cf the final sentences of Labov 1970a: " . . . the kind of solutions offered to problems . . . are deeply embedded in the data. It is reasonable to believe that they are more than constructions of the analyst - they are properties of language itself."

⁷ For equally unequivocal statements of Popper, cf: "There can be no ultimate statements in science." (1959:47) "Science . . . can never claim to have attained truth, or even a substitute for it such as probability." (1959:278) " . . . every scientific statement must remain tentative forever." (1959:280, emphasis in original).

any detail. I will discuss some of these problems in relation to the data used in the present study.

First I should mention some important practical problems involved in sociolinguistic fieldwork.

4.4. PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

With reference to very practical problems, Labov is again in the forefront, reassuring researchers by emphasising as genuine such problems as: what does the field worker actually say to his informants when he comes face-to-face with them? (see especially Labov 1972b:111); or where should the microphone go, and how can the best quality recordings be obtained?

The recording problem is especially difficult in schools, with large numbers of speakers involved, echoing corridors, bells, bare floors and walls, no curtains, and scuffling feet. The solution adopted in this study was to tape-record small groups comprising a teacher with up to seven pupils; and to take observational notes in traditional sized classes as a check on the type of speech recorded. In a comparable study, Sinclair et al (1972) also tape-recorded small groups of pupils with a teacher. They made no check by observational methods, but analysed a few tapes of whole classes recorded by others.

In recording small groups, I found that a cassette tape-recorder with an omnidirectional microphone, placed on the teacher's desk or worn by him as a lavalier microphone, was adequate for a very clear recording of the teacher and understandable recordings of the pupils, even of foreign speakers.

The other main practical problem is the amount of time needed for

transcription - which is of course only a preliminary to coding and other types of analysis. Transcription is an enormously lengthy business, and in itself cuts down the amount of data that can be reasonably analysed.⁸ As two comparisons, the Sinclair *et al* (1972) study is based on about thirteen hours' recording; and Barnes (1969) is based on twelve lessons from one day. The present study is based on about eleven hours' tape-recorded teacher-pupil talk, plus other data. (See 4.11.)

But the amount of data which is necessary or useful for studies on spoken interaction is a theoretical question, to which I now turn.

4.5. HOW MUCH DATA?

Different amounts of data, e.g. tape-recordings or notes, are needed for different purposes. More data are needed to compare different teachers in different situations, for example, than, as in this study, to isolate characteristic features of teacher-talk as such.

Birdwhistell (1961), who is similarly interested in the system underlying people's knowledge of how to behave in public, stresses "the sheer repetitiousness of human behaviour". He claims to have isolated basic patterns of behaviour in twenty-second stretches of film.

⁸ A lesson lasting 50 - 60 minutes takes up about 30 pages of transcript, typed double spaced. See appendix 2. Transcription time varies enormously depending on the quality and complexity of the recording, but it could take a minimum of 20 hours to transcribe one lesson down to word level and hesitation phenomena; and correspondingly much longer to transcribe for intonation or phonetically. This is about the time quoted also by Stern, ed., 1969:164. Pittenger *et al* (1960) say that it took 25 - 30 hours to transcribe the 5 minutes of interview they use in their book, i.e. down to narrow phonetic transcription. Birdwhistell gives even longer transcription times for dealing with kinesic data. He claims (1970:xii) to have reduced transcription time from about 100 hours per second to less than one hour per second.

Talking of patterns of language-use according to social class stratification, Labov (1970a) claims that patterns emerge from samples of only twenty-five speakers, and that results are possible with only five speakers in each cell, and five to ten samples of each linguistic variable from each speaker.⁹ To study sociolinguistic variation, it is not necessary, then, to analyse statistically the speech of large numbers of informants. Sankoff (1972) finds that in studies of complex speech communities, a well-chosen sample of fifty to 150 speakers can represent the whole range of variation existing within that community. But the notion of a sample being "well" or "intelligently" chosen introduces implicitly the concept of "theoretical sampling", which I develop from the following section onwards. Since, in the present study I make no claims to have tapped the whole range of talk regarded as appropriate to teaching situations, a correspondingly small number of teachers has been studied.

There are many striking examples of how very general theory may result from study of small amounts of data. In spite of the criticisms which Labov (1970a, 1973) makes about Chomsky having recourse to his own intuitions in producing data, Chomsky has certainly shown that advances in linguistics do not necessarily come from poring over vast amounts of data, but can also result from analysing small fragments in great detail. Chomsky proposes linguistic universals almost entirely on the basis of a small subset of the sentences of one language. He can be faulted insofar as his claims should be tested on languages other than English in order to be

⁹ To study independent variables which correlate with linguistic behaviour, e.g. age, ethnic group, etc., Labov (1966a) estimates that a larger sample of about eighty speakers is required.

empirically corroborated. But he cannot be faulted if his primary aim is to generate formal linguistic theory, and to study formal constraints on syntax.¹⁰

Similarly, in discourse analysis, Sacks has isolated highly general mechanisms (such as "membership categorisation devices" and "adjacency pair") by analysing conversational exchanges of only a few utterances in length (Sacks 1967-72) or by "over-analysing" a sequence of just two sentences¹¹ (Sacks 1972a). Other illustrations that very general descriptive statements can emerge from a close analysis of small amounts of conversational data are Goffman's (1971) analysis of "supportive" and "remedial" interchanges, and Schegloff (1968) on the first five seconds of telephone calls.

The argument that research on spoken interaction is not necessarily advanced through the accumulation by data-mongering of vast amounts of undigested "facts", brings us to the concept of "theoretical sampling" to which I now turn.

4.6. THEORETICAL SAMPLING

Concepts of sampling traditionally involve the notion of randomness. Either the researcher dips into a population entirely at random, on the assumption that a large enough sample will show the whole range

¹⁰ This is explicitly the aim at least of Chomsky's early published work: "The ultimate aim of these investigations should be a theory of linguistic structure in which the descriptive devices utilized in particular grammars are presented and studied abstractly, with no specific reference to particular languages." Chomsky 1957:11. My emphasis.

¹¹ "The baby cried. The mommy picked it up." This is the whole of a young child's story.

of behaviour he wants to study. Or, more usually, he makes a compromise, such as dividing up the population into theoretical categories, e.g. social class groups, and then dips into each category." But it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get a theoretically random sample. To take a very simple example, the well-tried pin-and-telephone-book method will produce not a random sample, but a sample biased towards middle and upper income groups; although the resulting sample may well be negligibly biased, for practical purposes, on criteria other than social class. Similar biases tend to creep into more sophisticated methods.

An alternative to trying to obtain a random sample, is to be intelligent and explicit about choosing a sample which will give special insights into whatever one wants to study. This is essentially the concept of theoretical sampling, proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). It involves seeking out people and situations which are likely to be particularly revealing or fruitful with respect to the phenomena in which one is interested. It is a way of gathering suggestive and "rich" data, in as pure a form as possible, (and with as little time wasted as possible). The researcher chooses groups or situations that will help to generate to the fullest extent the properties of his theoretical categories.¹²

¹² For the use of theoretical sampling in classroom research see Delamont (1973) and Parlett & Hamilton (1972). Parlett & Hamilton combine the notion with "progressive focussing", which is theoretical sampling within theoretical sampling, and similar to the "tapered corpus" idea which I mention below in 4.11. Progressive focussing allows new information to redefine and clarify emerging problems as the investigation unfolds. Problems are not pre-defined from the outset of the investigation: when this is allowed to happen, the methodological tail has wagged the dog.

Glaser and Strauss put forward these recommendations within the general argument that anyone can provide a "dust heap" of facts, but only the social scientist can provide the theory that makes sense of them. They claim also that concepts that are generated by, or "grounded in", the data collected by theoretical sampling will typically be more understandable to sociologists and laymen alike, than much grand sociological theory which has often no explicit links with data. In this sense, Hymes' programmatic theory of language-use (discussed in 2.2) is not "grounded in" data.

The notion of theoretical sampling is present, in an elementary form, in Labov's suggestion (1972a:118) that:

"the future study of language in context will depend heavily upon the development of means of enriching the data of natural conversation". (My emphasis.)

Labov is concerned primarily with eliciting rare grammatical forms, but the point holds good in studies of language functions and conversational analysis, as in the present study. Labov details various interview situations which will elicit different styles of speech along a casual-formal continuum, but does not specify any techniques for enriching the data as such, outside interview situations, or for choosing suggestive naturally occurring situations. His ingenious techniques such as spot questions in stores to elicit answers of, say, "the fourth floor" (to study pronunciation of final consonants) are quick ways of collecting data to focus on a particular problem, not specifically ways of enriching data.

The tape-recorded data used in the present study come mainly from traditional-style classroom lessons, in which native English speaking teachers were teaching English as a foreign language to French children. All the talk was in English, and I am particularly concerned

with analysing the teachers' language. This highly selective choice of data is understandable via the concept of theoretical sampling, which has been used in two main ways, as follows.

The main sociolinguistic concern of the present study is to isolate ways in which one speaker may control or organise the development of discourse. Now, teaching situations are a good place to start looking for such types of organisation in talk, since teachers themselves are typically concerned with how to organise the material they present verbally to their pupils. They are keen to show their pupils that there is order and system in their words! They consider it as part of their job to point out the coherence in what their pupils may otherwise consider as a conglomeration of unconnected, unsystematic and uninteresting facts. Teachers are also professionally interested in organising other aspects of the communication system in the classroom. They are concerned with: getting and keeping their pupils' attention; getting them to contribute to the lesson when appropriate and to keep quiet when appropriate; checking on whether their pupils understand the point of the lesson; and with clarifying what they think their pupils have not understood.

Therefore, taking the teaching situation as an example of a speech event is itself an example of theoretical sampling. It supposes that the particularly asymmetrical power relations within most classrooms will provide rich data on the range of ways in which one speaker may control the development of discourse.

Secondly, tape-recorded data collected in a French-English teaching situation highlight certain peculiarities of the communication situation in the classroom as follows. A native speaking to foreigners is likely to be conscious of having to make an effort to

make sure he is "getting across" to his hearers. But this problem only exaggerates the essentially similar problem faced by any teacher: how can he check up on whether his pupils understand what he is trying to teach them? In other words, to ask a teacher to teach foreign pupils does not present him with essentially different problems (in terms, at least, of monitoring understanding), but only with more acute problems of the same kind. The idea of theoretical sampling is therefore applied here to reveal a form of behaviour which might otherwise be difficult to study in its full range, by setting up a situation which will generate a wide range of this behaviour.

Data from the cross-cultural teaching situation have also been supported, however, by field notes of teacher-talk collected during periods of classroom observation in traditional "chalk and talk" English lessons in a Scottish secondary school. Some of these data are also used below in chapters 5 to 8. Rich data generated by theoretical sampling can be used to develop concepts which can then be applied to, or checked against, data from more "normal" situations.

4.7. TRIANGULATION

An important part of Glaser and Strauss' argument is that any method may be good for generating ideas¹³, and that a combination is probably best. Webb et al (1966) similarly argue the need for combining different methods of research in the social sciences, first since

¹³ Of the Popper quotes in 4.3 above. Popper is similarly unworried where ideas come from, arguing that the origin of ideas is the concern of psychology, not of the philosophy of science.

this provides a means of cross-validation, and second since no measure ever taps a single, isolated, pure parameter. So far, in this chapter (as in chapter 2), I have been arguing precisely that all measures are theoretically complex, since they always involve the researcher's interpretations.¹⁴ Webb et al refer to this process of gathering data on a topic from different angles as "triangulation".

Cicourel also uses the term, in a theoretically more loaded way, emphasising that however much we "triangulate", the result will always be "indefinite".

"I use the expression 'indefinite triangulation' to suggest that every procedure that seems to 'lock in' evidence, thus to claim a level of adequacy, can itself be subjected to the same sort of analysis that will in turn produce yet another indefinite arrangement of new particulars or a rearrangement of previously established particulars in 'authoritative', 'final', 'formal' accounts." (Cicourel 1973:124)

Thus different kinds of evidence may be combined, but the account will always depend on the reader filling in knowledge, and will never be finally validated. On this point, compare again the quotes from Popper (in 4.3 above) on the ultimate relativity of statements in science.¹⁵

It has become fairly frequent for papers on sociolinguistics to insist that different methods be combined in research. For example,

¹⁴ With reference to phonology again, even the phonetician sets up his instruments to measure what he thinks is important - he cannot measure everything. Extreme attempts at "just measuring" things (e.g. by Panconcelli-Calzia) do not work in the end. Cf my earlier discussion in 2.3.1 of the etic-emic distinction.

¹⁵ The links between the metatheoretical discussion of Popper (on the philosophy of science), of Cicourel and the ethnomethodologists (on the status of explanations in social science) and of Chomsky (on the adequacy of linguistic descriptions) are an exciting but unexplored topic. I have unfortunately no space to devote to this topic in the present study.

Hymes (1964) insists that it is meaningless to study language-use, language functions and language valuation as though they were separate, and that different methods are required to study this complex of behaviour and belief. Similarly, Labov's principle of "convergence" in linguistic methodology is that

"the value of new data for confirming and interpreting old data is directly proportional to the differences in the methods used to gather it." (Labov 1972b:102)

Labov's own macro-level, survey-style studies on patterns of social class stratification and language variation link data on the use of phonological and grammatical variables (gathered in interview situations and partly checked by unsystematic observation in natural situations) and on subjective evaluations of language (gathered by artificially constructed tests¹⁶). He shows that complementary patterns emerge from both sets of data. His analysis of a speech event (Labov 1972a on "sounding" or exchanges of ritual insults in American Negro culture) links data on the grammatical forms and sequencing of "sounds", with inferences as to their function, and with a discussion of participants' own evaluations and explicit discussion of the "sounds". The links made are not however discussed by Labov as in any way problematic.

In the present study I will use the following general argument to link data collected by tape-recording, classroom observation, random naturalistic observation, interviews, questionnaires and reports,

¹⁶ E.g. the subjective reaction test in which subjects are asked to rate tape-recorded speakers in terms of occupational suitability; and the index of linguistic insecurity which requires subjects to choose which of two socially significant pronunciations of words is "correct" and which they themselves use; the measure of "linguistic insecurity" is the number of items on which their judgements differ between "correctness" and self-reported usage.

into a coherent model of an aspect of teaching as a speech event.¹⁷

One central concern is with what makes teacher-talk recognisable to competent hearers as a distinctive style or variety of English. The selection of data by theoretical sampling which has already been partly explicated, involves drawing on the same knowledge or communicative competence of what is appropriate or typical teacher-talk as, say, the ability to take useful classroom notes on typical teacher-talk. This is because the ability to find a fruitful theoretical sample implies intelligent choices about what would be relevant, useful and significant data. This same knowledge is similarly and inevitably involved in both setting up a category system for teacher-talk, in using such a system to code transcriptions, and in setting up interpretive rules to explicate part of the knowledge implicit in the category system. In each case, the topic I want to study, namely the communicative competence involved in recognising and producing appropriate teacher-talk, is irremediably involved as a resource which I need, in order to be able to set up a description of this competence in the first place. Note that the argument is not simply that there are assumptions, tacit knowledge, communicative competence, etc. behind the research description, and that these should be brought out into the open and made explicit - but that this competence

¹⁷ For a study of classroom behaviour, which links (in a different way to that proposed here) data on social interaction gathered by systematic observation schedules, unstructured observation, interviews, and paper and pencil tests, see Delamont 1973. Cf also Hamilton 1973, which similarly uses different types of data in classroom research, although Hamilton is less directly concerned with verbal interaction. And of my editorial comments and the introductory chapter by Delamont & Hamilton, in Stubbs & Delamont eds. forthcoming, for discussion of the merits of combining different methods in classroom research.

is precisely one research topic.¹⁸

There is no mystery about this essential circularity or "reflexivity" in descriptions of social interaction. For example, Chomskyan transformational generative grammar can be set up only with the aid of intuitive knowledge of the system, usually the linguist's own. Its output can only be checked against native intuitions. And yet the grammar purports to be a model of that knowledge. This is Cicourel's "indefiniteness". (See quote above.) Labov (1970a, 1973) may criticise Chomsky for reliance on his own intuitions as data, but the arguments which Labov uses also dispose of Labov's own claim to be "right". (Of the quotes from Labov above.)

The second stage of argument which I use in this study in order to relate different types of data, is that there is similarly no essential and principled difference between my knowledge as linguist-researcher (which allows me to interpret and set up descriptions of speech events) and the knowledge of lay speakers, such as teachers and pupils (which allows them to interpret discourse and hear it as appropriate to different speech events). Again, to repeat, this knowledge is the very topic of study. Alongside my (researcher's) description of teacher-talk, I have therefore collected pupils' and teachers' accounts of teacher-pupil talk, and explored some of the knowledge of social structures which provides the underlying coherence and logic of such accounts. (See chapter 9.)

¹⁸ I am not sure how far I would wish to press this view in studies other than of social interaction. But where social interaction, language-use and meaning are the professed topics of study in any case, then it seems to hold. In studies of other areas of social life, one may decide, for practical reasons, to take as a resource one's competence as a language user and social interactant. I feel, however, that this decision should at least be a deliberate one.

The aim of this explicitly and unavoidably circular approach is to give some leverage on the question of what status the proposed research descriptions can claim.

4.8. THE PROBLEM OF PERCEPTION

One final and very important justification for a form of theoretical sampling in work on social interaction, is the problem of perception. There are two distinct problems in research into social interaction. One is to describe it. But the first is to see what is going on.

Much writing on social behaviour or interpersonal interaction expresses an almost primitive awe in the face of its complexity or "richness" (assuming, of course, that it does not sidestep this complexity, as experimental social psychology has often done, by setting out to "control" variables, i.e. complexity). Researchers have shown many details in the patterned routines or conventions which shape our communicative behaviour at many levels: linguistic; paralinguistic (i.e. intonation, accent, etc., Laver 1968, Crystal 1971); kinesic (i.e. body motion, Birdwhistell passim); proxemic (i.e. body position, Hall passim), and so on, without always bringing out the functions of the different means of communication found. For example, in the study by Pittenger et al (1960) of the first five minutes of a psychiatric interview, great sensitivity to the extreme complexity of what is going on does not lead to any significant generalisations about the functions of different items of communicative behaviour. The analysis, as the authors admit, is entirely at the "ideographic" level, of what is particular and unique. Lenneberg (1962) puts this neatly (and ironically?) in his review of the book:

"Microscopic interview analysis . . . is a new tool for its users. Its resolving power seems to be excellent. Let us hope, now, that we can discover something with it."

Pittenger et al's overall conclusion is that in human communicative behaviour, "nothing never happens", or that "anything anyone ever says is true" (p. 243). Such paradoxical statements reveal disquieting truths. A teacher inevitably communicates something to his pupils the moment he walks into a classroom - by his style of speech, his tone of voice, his gestures, his facial expression, and by whether he sits stolidly behind his desk or walks up the passage and puts his arm round a pupil's shoulder. Members of a society do interpretive work on the smallest and most fleeting fragments of behaviour.¹⁹

But in another sense, such paradoxical statements are unhelpful. There is no direct way to investigate such complexity of behaviour. If a researcher wants a fruitful strategy, it does not help simply to emphasise how skilfully we all manipulate and interpret information coming and going simultaneously on many channels. Too much happens too fast in the classroom for the researcher to take account of it and describe it directly. Walker and Adelman (1972:55ff) give particularly good examples of the complexity of classroom events, not just their sheer quantity, but the fact that a complex of meanings builds up over time, say over a school year or longer.

The linguist-researcher usually understands what is going on in the classroom - he has been a pupil at school, if not a teacher, and has therefore been a native member of the society whose behaviour he

¹⁹ For judgements from voice about personality and emotions, see Allport & Cantril 1934, Kramer 1963, Laver 1968, Beldoch 1964. On posture, Schefflen 1964, Hall passim, Birdwhistell passim. On gaze, Argyle & Dean 1965, Kendon 1967. The last two papers listed do in fact discuss the functions of gaze direction in organising communication situations, synchronising speakers, etc.

is trying to describe. But, as such, he preinterprets the behaviour, just as other natives do. He "understands" what he sees, even before he has a chance to record it.

The "seen but unnoticed" expectancies (Garfinkel 1967:36) which govern the smooth on-going of verbal interaction are even more difficult to make visible in their relevant details than the other taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life in society. Language is even closer to us than other social routines, implicated as it is in the development of our cognitive and self-regulative processes (Luria 1959), as well as being part and parcel of our everyday social interaction. The researcher therefore needs some estrangement device²⁰ to enable him to step back and observe what is going on in situations of face-to-face verbal communication. It is all too easy to record data on speech behaviour - all one needs is a tape-recorder. But such data are too rich to be useful, unless one has also a way of focussing on the features of communication which are relevant. An indiscriminating gaze down the microscope will generally tell the researcher nothing: what events reveal depends on the nature of our questions.

One way of breaching the researcher's expectancies is to have him concentrate on the causes, forms and effects of miscommunication. Rather than attempt to capture directly how people communicate, the researcher can concentrate on the problematic aspects of communication situations - points for example at which communication typically

²⁰ Garfinkel (1967:38) proposes techniques "as aids to a sluggish imagination" which "produce reflections through which the strangeness of an obstinately familiar world can be detected." Precisely the same use is made of "Verfremdungseffekte" in literature, e.g. by Brecht and Kafka. On these parallels between literature and recent sociology, see my brief discussion in 10.3.

breaks down or encounters difficulties. By looking at what happens when people fail to get the message across, at why this happens, and at what speakers do in order to reinstate the normal smooth flow of interaction, one can gain insight into the routine structures of behaviour. Some researchers would go as far as to bewilder people deliberately by disrupting the routine structure of interaction, in order to study the manoeuvres they adopt to restore the balance. Thus Garfinkel (1967: 38) writes that:

"procedurally it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and see what can be done to make trouble".

The mock counselling experiment analysed in McHugh (1968) is based on such a ploy. But one need not go as far as this. Linguists are familiar with the idea that characteristic malfunctions of a system indicate how the system normally functions. This is one reason why linguists have devoted much effort to looking at children's language acquisition, at speech defects, slips of the tongue, and various forms of speech pathology such as aphasia.²¹

Even in everyday conversation, moments of miscommunication arise more frequently than is often realised. But there is a general rule

²¹ See especially Laver 1970 for a discussion of evidence about neural control systems from hesitations, language disorders, etc. Campbell & Wales 1970 discuss errors in language acquisition as evidence of ways in which children organise experience through language. Fry 1970 uses error-correction in normal speech as evidence for multi-level planning and reception of speech. Marshall 1970 summarises evidence for some pathological speech disturbances. Note that this kind of evidence is also a criticism of the Chomskyan competence-performance distinction, since errors are not "merely" performance, but have their own systematicness. A classic study from another field, based on the same principle, is, of course, Freud's The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901) which discusses the deep determinants of slips of the tongue, forgetting of proper names, etc., to argue that "the unconscious does not lie".

in our society that demands that interaction proceed at a smooth flow; silences are often considered embarrassing²², and disagreements must normally be mitigated. So speakers immediately counteract departures from the smooth on-going of normal face-to-face interaction by making (if necessary violent) attempts to restore the "ritual equilibrium" (Goffman 1955). Normally, vigorous attempts are not necessary, since a constantly self-regulating mechanism generally operates during situations of talk - a delicately set thermostat which keeps the communication system simmering at the desired temperature. "Gaffes", "faux pas" and "quiproquos" are allowed to run their disastrous or farcical course only on the stage. Participants in a conversation typically combine to minimise misunderstandings as soon as they appear on the horizon, by constantly monitoring their own language, reading between the lines of other speakers' speech, and by keeping an eye on the system itself. It is precisely this monitoring by teachers of the communication system in the classroom which will be the main topic of chapters 5 to 8.

However, one can think of common expressions in English to do with communication going wrong, and of people failing to pick up communicative cues: "a nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse", "he doesn't know when he's not wanted", "he didn't get the message", "he can't take a hint". All these idioms point to the need to do constant interpretive work on the attitudes underlying the overt message - the need to continually "read between the lines". But these systems-management mechanisms are brought into action so fast that they are

22 This is not the case for all cultures: see Basso 1970, and my discussion of this in 7.2.

not easily visible except in problematic situations which force the speakers to take more explicit and vigorous correcting manoeuvres than usual. Examples of problematic situations which reveal more clearly the kind of strategy which speakers have for "keeping in touch" with each other include: talking to a blind person²³, or talking to someone on the telephone (i.e. no visual feedback); communicating with a deaf person; situations of cross-cultural communication; . . . and teaching.

Cicourel, for example, has done research with the deaf on sign language. Note however that Cicourel emphasises the complexity of deaf native signing as a fully developed natural language. (Cicourel 1972, Cicourel & Boese 1972.) Birdwhistell (1973:112) also warns against the simplistic belief that the study of the deaf and the blind will somehow isolate communicative behaviours and make them easy to study. Such studies give different, but not a simplified, perspective.

As a brief example of the way in which insights into features of social interaction can result from studying problematic communication situations, the BBC radio programme for the blind and partially sighted, "In Touch", recently (September 1973) discussed several listeners' letters on the problem which they have in getting the attention of personnel in shops, and the problems caused when normally sighted persons want to engage them in a social encounter, for example prior to helping them across the street. The discussion was primarily over what cues could be substituted for the normal

²³ H. G. Wells' (1904) short story "The Country of the Blind" is a fascinating example of the sociological insights which can result from imagining such situations of problematic communication.

nonverbal cues routinely used to get into conversation with another person. It thus revealed many features of conversation which are problematic for the blind, but which are taken for granted by sighted people.

I am suggesting then that it is a fruitful research strategy to look at ways in which speakers compensate for difficulties inherent in the communication system. For people in social situations have not only ways of maintaining equilibrium, they have also ways of systematically dealing with problematic situations when they arise. Seeking out problematic communication situations as fruitful for research is precisely a form of theoretical sampling.

The remaining chapters of this study will therefore deal with questions such as: what kind of instructions are available to speakers who find themselves in problematic (cross-cultural teaching) situations? what kind of competence can be imputed to them? what kind of sociolinguistic skills, in other words, are peculiar to teaching?

4.9. AN ILLUSTRATION

As a brief illustration of a few of the points made in this chapter, I append a piece of data with some comments. After some thirty pages of methodology, the reader deserves some light relief. And the reader who has skipped to this point might be encouraged to go back over the more academic presentation of the arguments which the data partially illustrate.

So, as a concrete footnote to a rather abstract methodological chapter, consider the following short conversational exchange, from my fieldnotes, as a piece of data which gives sharp illustrations of

some of the things that I have been discussing: namely, a problem in communication, a moment of miscommunication, and a long string of interpretive work collapsed into a very short interchange, including two reinterpretations of one remark.

The situation is a small conversational group within a party on an evening during a research conference. One person, whom I call C, is doing imitations of people. He does a peculiar walk. No one recognises it. Finally I recognise it as Groucho Marx. The exchange goes:

- C redoes walk. (1)
- MWS: Very good. Ten out of ten. Full marks. (2)
- C: (Pause. No reaction.) (3)
- (Suddenly.) You've almost got it. (4)
- MWS: I HAVE got it. (5)
- C: Ah! (6)

I start with a problem of how to communicate to C that I have recognised the walk, without telling the others the answer. I must not only tell C that I know the answer (he might think I was bluffing), but show him that I know. Within this short exchange at least the following interpretations were performed and solutions to problems found.

- i) I find a play on words: Marx/marks.
- ii) I find a context to apply this play on words by apparently using the comment "Full marks" to praise the walk as a good walk, funny in itself perhaps.
- iii) But I have another problem. If I say "Full marks" on its own, this may not be understood out of context; i.e. I am aware of a possible misunderstanding. One potential trouble might be that some people could mishear it as a name, since that is what they

are expecting at this point. If they mishear it as the name "Marx", my play on words would have misfired. So I construct a context which sets up hearers to hear it as I intend, by saying, "Very good. Ten out of ten. . . ."

- iv) I expect C to hear both senses, since I know that he knows the name, and I expect him to bring this knowledge to bear on interpreting my utterance.
- v) C does not react - he does not understand my joke.²⁴ I.e. he interprets my remark as the others would, as applying unambiguously to a description of the walk.
- vi) At (4), C reinterprets what I have said. He sees the play on words that I have made, but does not realise that I have made it consciously. C now tells me the joke that I have just told him! Presumably he does this as a clue to me and others. He gives me a puzzle to solve, not realising that I have already constructed that puzzle and given it to him.
- vii) At (5) I show him that I am aware of the joke. I.e. I solve a new problem: for after (4) I still have to tell C that I recognise the walk. If I say nothing now, my joke is wasted, and doubly - for I now have the chance of a joke at C's expense, i.e. that he has told me my own joke, on top of my original play on words.

²⁴ Ways in which jokes are used spontaneously in natural settings can provide many insights into the routine structures of everyday interaction, but their complex social functions (in social control, broaching taboo topics, etc.) have hardly been studied. For a paper which does discuss jokes in order to illuminate central features of a social setting, see Walker & Adelman, forthcoming.

viii) C reinterprets my remark (2) for the second time, and then shows me that he has "got the point" and that he now "knows what I am talking about". Note that he inevitably sees both jokes together: he could not see one without the other. He sees my original joke, plus his joke misfiring, plus my topping his attempted joke, plus that we both see all this. At the end of the sequence, he can see the sense of the whole sequence, which he has not seen during it.

For C, the sense of "what is going on" or "what is being talked about" emerges and changes during the exchange. The meaning which unfolds is also negotiated: expressed informally, I refuse to let C get away with the interpretation of my original remark which (I suppose) he forms.²⁵

Obviously this exchange is not typical. We are not always required to solve plays on words. But we do routinely perform long strings of interpretations, collapsed into short and rapid conversational exchanges. Such examples demonstrate the complexity of interpretation of which conversationalists are technically capable.

However, the point of the example is that it is not typical, but illuminative: it shows up sharply what might be less clear in more

²⁵ Having shown this analysis, precisely as it appears here, to the person I have called C, I received these comments from him which can be used to "triangulate" on the quoted data:

"You need . . . my cultural expectations . . . (The incident) was a surprise - it was not in my expectations for how you would be thinking and talking . . . As you point out, I did not realise that you had not only got the answer but had capped it with a pun. (I like the analysis.) But the bit left out is the way my strong cultural expectations of you prevented the meaning of what you said being understood by me. If the remark had come from (X or Y) I probably would have got the point."

mundane exchanges. It is a short theoretical sample based explicitly on a problem of communication and miscommunication. I have commented on this exchange only by showing particular examples of some of the interpretations which were probably made, in order to argue that the interpretive work was at least as complex as this, but allowing that other interpretive work could also have been involved in the exchange. I will be concerned in the rest of the study with ways in which more general and formalised statements can be made about his kind of interpretive work which is routinely performed on connected discourse. I will also argue that, without such interpretations, discourse would not be "connected".

4.10. CONCLUSION

Published papers in sociolinguistics, and in the social sciences in general, rarely give glimpses of the methodological troubles of their authors. Papers appear tidily packaged - as this study is - between introductions and conclusions, and labelled with titles, subtitles, references, cross-references and footnotes. Behind such papers lie the untidy aspects of research: informants who never turned up, drawers full of collected but unused (unusable?) data, and days spent browsing in other people's papers to put off writing one's own.

I have argued in this chapter that finding pattern in the passing social scene involves particular practical problems, and I have suggested strategies for solving some of them. But I have also argued that such practical problems are irremediably involved in theoretical questions, when the topic of research is how people interpret social behaviour.

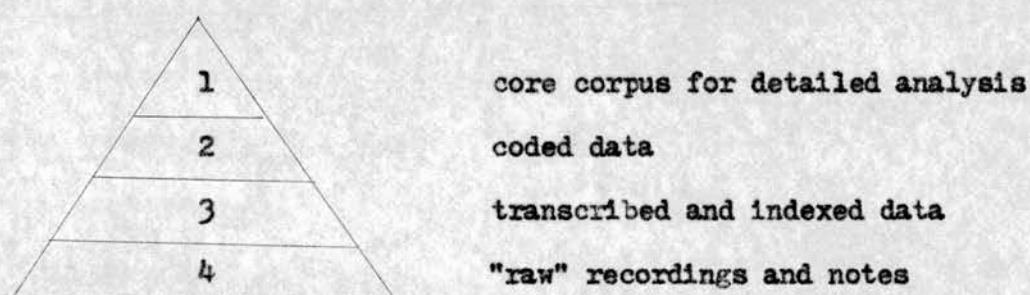
4.11. THE DATA USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Data were collected relevant to two main areas concerned with language-use in teaching situations: (1) tape-recorded and observational data on teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom, and (2) interview and written data on teachers' and pupils' accounts of classroom talk. A list of the data is as follows.

- (1a) About 11 hours' tape-recorded teacher-pupil talk, of 8 native English speaking teachers with small classes and discussion groups of French pupils aged 12 to 17. These audio-recordings were made in August 1971 and August 1972 at a summer school in England. The recordings, all in English, are of English as second language teaching.
- (1b) Observational notes of English as first language teaching, from two teachers with IIInd and Vth form classes in an Edinburgh secondary school. Notes were made in longhand, primarily of things the teachers said, over a period of about 6 weeks classroom observation, January to March 1972.
- (2a) About 15 hours' tape-recorded and transcribed interviews with 40 Scottish pupils, aged 12 to 13 and 15 to 16, and a few adults. This is quasi-experimental data from an interview situation in which informants talked about speech in teaching situations.
- (2b) Supplementary data including 80 teachers' report sheets on lessons which they had conducted.

Not all of these data have been analysed to the same extent. Rather I have used them according to principles of theoretical sampling and progressive focussing within the corpus. For example, the

interview data (2a) has been systematically analysed (in chapter 9), but the supplementary data from (2b) has been used only for additional illustrative material. Another way of expressing this, is to say that I am using a version of a "tapered corpus" (Samarin 1967:70, after Twaddell 1954), with theoretical sampling at each stage. Diagrammatically this can be represented as follows (my variation on Twaddell):



4.12. A NOTE ON DATA-PRESENTATION

As I note above, there are no widely accepted methods of presenting data on spoken interaction. I use several different methods of presenting observational and tape-recorded data on speech behaviour in this study, as seem appropriate to different purposes:

- (a) longish (i.e. up to several minutes) transcripts of teacher-pupil talk, either discussed in varying degrees of detail²⁶, or coded, or both coded and discussed;
- (b) short exchanges, from audio-recordings and field notes (i.e. of as little as two or three utterances, quoted and discussed in varying

²⁶ For other examples of this method of presentation see: Sacks 1972 which gives a transcript of a joke, several minutes long, and comments on it in detail; Barnes 1969, Walker & Adelman 1972, Labov 1969, Turner 1972.

- degrees of detail to illustrate particular points²⁷;
- (c) single utterances quoted to illustrate coding categories²⁸;
- (d) a coded transcript of a whole lesson, i.e. just under one hour's tape-recorded talk, reproduced in Appendix B.²⁹

²⁷ For this method see Sacks 1967-1972, Schegloff 1968, 1972, Goffman 1971, Labov 1972, Sinclair et al 1972, Torode 1972, Jefferson 1972, 1973.

²⁸ Cf Sinclair et al 1972.

²⁹ Cf Sinclair et al 1972, the only example I can find in the literature of this kind of presentation of data. Loman 1967 is simply a publication of transcripts of conversations with no analysis.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHING AS A SPEECH EVENT

I: AN INITIAL DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

The first four chapters have discussed and developed various concepts which claim to describe and explain aspects of social encounters and speech events. I have constantly emphasised the need for socio-linguistic theory to be developed on conversational data collected in their natural social setting. But my argument so far has made only passing reference to actual data. The main point of the next four chapters will be to present extracts of teacher-pupil talk, to illustrate and develop the concepts already presented.

5.1. FOREWORD: THE FORM OF THE ARGUMENT

In introducing the analyses of actual teacher-pupil talk over the next four chapters, this would be an appropriate moment to forestall some points which I have found to be sources of misunderstanding when readers have commented on parts of my work.

The main point is that none of the interpretations or analyses which I propose of talk should be regarded as definitive. This is not through any lack of confidence which I may have in my analyses, but because it is in the nature of language always to be open to reinterpretation. This ultimate ambiguity of language-use is a commonsense phenomenon, to which speakers themselves are careful to

attend, in situations in which "misunderstandings" matter.¹ People are quite aware that language can be construed in many different ways: this is why important documents or speeches go through many drafts, and why lawyers may still be required to "interpret" the results. The ethnomethodologists are not the first to point out the inherent incompleteness of any use of language - although they have amply shown the all-pervasiveness of the phenomenon. There is always the danger, however, in studies of the present kind that the researcher appears to criticise the interpretations of others, but to regard his own intuitive grasp of "what is really going on" as somehow superior, or even "correct".² I see no way out of this danger, without constant, and ultimately irritating, caveats to the effect that, "of course, another interpretation is always possible".

To take the theoretical stance that all language is ultimately indefinite in meaning, does not however open the door to allowing all researchers' interpretations as equally valid. The aim must be to provide principled and general reasons for preferring one interpretation, or range of interpretations, of a piece of language-use: that is, to prove that such an interpretation is possible. (I further emphasise this point below, in 8.5, where it becomes directly relevant.) The aim at each stage of analysis must therefore be to make clear the status of the description or interpretation of

¹ For an example of such a situation, see Stubbs 1973 in Appendix E for comments on trade union negotiations, a speech event in which speakers constantly and explicitly orient to potential and actual misunderstandings.

² I liked a recent cartoon in Punch showing a BBC discussion programme, with the announcer saying, "and at the end of our discussion of the Chancellor's new measures, an independent expert will assess the degree of bias shown".

language-use which is proposed.

This point becomes clearer if I indicate the general form of the argument over the next five chapters. Chapters 5 and 6 set up a coding scheme for teacher-talk and discuss what such a scheme can tell us about spoken interaction in the classroom. Having discussed various uses of such a scheme, chapter 7 then discusses some difficulties and limitations in this type of analysis, and chapter 8 proposes an alternative analysis in the form of interpretive rules of discourse. Such rules are presented partly to remedy certain features of the coding scheme, but I emphasise that such rules have themselves certain inherent defects. Chapter 9 then presents pupils' accounts of teacher-talk, partly in order to compare the form of such "lay" accounts with researchers' descriptions; again to make the status of my (researcher's) description clearer. In this sense then, later chapters call into question the descriptions proposed in earlier chapters - not in a negative way, but in order to make the status of these descriptions clearer.

5.2. THE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

As I discussed in chapter 2, language in use can be analysed at many different levels, from cultural norms of behaviour down to small fragments of conversations. This study is concerned primarily with the question: how is one specific speech event organised? This chapter and the following one explore different organising functions which utterances typically serve within one particular speech event, "teaching", and isolate some types of sequential ordering or "linguistic routines", to use Hymes' (1971a) term, which help to hold the

talk together and make it coherent. The study will not explore in any detail the kinds of language which can fill or realise the functional slots which are isolated.

This distinction between slots and items which fill slots, or between "functions" and the ways in which such functions are realised, can be illustrated by Leach's (1961) metaphor. Leach points out that no amount of comparison between wristwatches and grandfather clocks will ever tell us what makes them tick. He uses this metaphor to suggest that research should not be concerned merely with classifying things or "butterfly collecting", but with general principles such as the attributes of clockwork. On the other hand, I would argue, such a classification and comparison of different types of time-piece might be a valid research procedure: it might tell us, for example, about the importance which people attach to time in a given society. Or, to take another metaphor³, one might analyse the "function" of trains, wheelbarrows and lorries as means of travel or transport. This comparison will clearly tell us nothing about how the internal combustion engine works, but it could well tell us about how the transport system functions. In other words, an analysis which is mere taxonomic "butterfly collecting" at one level, may be a valid functional analysis at another level.

One must therefore be careful to distinguish between what speech acts do (their function) and how they do it (their internal mechanism or stylistic realisation). I am interested here in what they do,

³ Provided by Brian Torode, personal communication, in the context of a criticism of my work on speech "functions". See also Torode 1973 for some criticisms of the notion of "functionalism" in conversational analysis. Such general discussion will unfortunately fall outside the scope of the present study.

i.e. in their "functions" (the term used by Hymes), the "work" they do or the "businesses" or "jobs" they have (Sacks' terms). In explaining what speech acts do, one can begin to see how speech events are organised.

It has not simply been an arbitrary decision however to study teacher-pupil interaction at the level of speech functions, rather than at the level of, say, how speech functions are realised "stylistically" or "grammatically". It is part of my argument that a primary characteristic of teacher-pupil talk is the vast difference in the range of functions and control over the discourse available to teacher and pupils within the same speech situation. It is the teacher who controls the discourse in the classroom, and he or she does so by means of speech with particular functions which pupils are typically not expected to use.

It may turn out that other varieties of discourse or types of speech event can best be distinguished at the level of how various speech acts are realised. But I argue here that teacher-pupil talk is optimally characterised at the level of linguistic routines composed of sequences of functional slots. Crystal and Davy (1969:96) argue that:

"Very often in stylistics, much of the interest in a text is concentrated at one level - a variety may be primarily distinguished through its phonology, or vocabulary, for example."

My criticism of Crystal and Davy in this connection is, however, that they do not discuss a specifically functional level of stylistic analysis. Expressed alternatively, if the aim is to distinguish one teacher from another, it will probably be necessary to look at "stylistic" features, such as forms of mitigation and politeness used.

Torode (1972, forthcoming) and Mishler (1972), discussed in 3.6 and 3.7, are interested in distinguishing different individual teachers, and therefore do so by looking at the internal organisation of their speech acts. But if the aim, as in this study, is to specify what talking like a teacher consists in, then the appropriate level of analysis is the function of speech acts.

I will now devote the rest of this chapter to a discursive analysis of specific observational and tape-recorded data.

5.3. A BRIEF ILLUSTRATION OF THE PROBLEM FOR ANALYSIS

One important kind of "organisation" of teaching as a speech event and one kind of problem for analysis, can be illustrated as follows, from an informally presented example.

Teachers have to devote a great deal of time and effort to simply "keeping in touch" with their pupils, not only because of the far from ideal communication conditions in the average school classroom, but also because of the very nature of teaching. (I continue to use the "contact" metaphors which I introduced in chapter 2.) They have to attract and hold their pupils' attention, to get them to speak or be quiet, to be more precise in what they say or write, and they have to try and keep some check on whether at least most of the pupils are following what is going on.

Consider the following piece of data (fieldnotes 1.53) noted at the beginning of an English lesson which I observed with a fifth form class. The teacher had been standing at the front of the class talking quietly to some pupils. He then turned and said to the whole class:

Teacher: "Eh, right! eh, fags out please!"

((still lot of noise))

"People who want to do some language stuff come down to the front."

((pupils still talking))

"Come on then. Will you get on then."

. . . 4

Consider the remark: "Fags out please!" No pupils were smoking, so the teacher did not intend his remark to be taken literally. I suggest that this remark had the primary function of attracting the pupils' attention, of warning them of messages still to come - in short, of opening the communication channels. The remark had a metacommunicative "contact" function of putting the teacher "in touch" with the pupils.

The problems of analysing language-use of this kind are not trivial, and yet they have received almost no detailed consideration from linguists. For example, how did the pupils know that the teacher did "not really mean" that they had to extinguish their nonexistent cigarettes? How is it that such an utterance can serve a function which has no overt or superficial connection with its form or explicit content? What shared knowledge and expectations concerning appropriate teacher-pupil speech behaviour did the pupils draw on, in order to successfully interpret what the teacher "actually meant"? And how, therefore, can such communicative competence be analysed?

⁴ Extract from fieldnotes. Examples of teacher-pupil talk given in double quotes are the actual words spoken and noted down at the time during periods of classroom observation. Spelling and punctuation have been conventionalised.

The crucial point here is that no analysis of the remark "Tags out please!", whether semantic, syntactic or pragmatic, will reveal its meaning or use in this situation, if it is taken out of its context in the sequence of discourse. Its import for hearers can be analysed only by reference to its occurrence in a conversational slot, i.e. near the beginning of an opening section of a school lesson and, more specifically, after a "Eh, right!". It is understood by its hearers partly by reference to its sequential position in a characteristic lesson-opening sequence which can be loosely described as:

teacher: {attracts } {orders pupils} {announces lesson} {starts}
 {attention} { to be quiet } { topic } {lesson} . . .

In other words, the remark is inevitably heard as teacher-talk, and specifically heard as part of the presequence which typically precedes teaching talk. I will not be primarily concerned below with such a structural analysis of teacher-pupil talk⁵, although this will be one topic as appropriate, but a central topic will be how talk is heard as teacher-talk.

Note for this example that I have imputed meaning or function to the utterance by reference to its occurrence in a "slot" in a sequence of such slots, and by reference to a teacher's general concerns in the classroom (e.g. getting pupils' attention). The interpretation of this utterance at least has very little to do with the realisation or exponent of the functional slot. (Cf 5.2.)

⁵ The fullest discussion of sequential ordering in teacher-pupil talk in the literature is Sinclair et al 1972.

I now continue this discussion with reference to specific tape-recorded data on classroom talk.

(I hope incidentally that this initial example of a piece of teacher-talk and the informal discussion have themselves performed a "contact" function of preparing the reader for what I want to discuss, and hence of putting us both "in touch" or "on the same wavelength".)

5.4. EXAMPLES FROM TAPE-RECORDED TEACHER-PUPIL TALK

So, I continue now by giving a number of short transcripts of parts of the tape-recordings of the French-English teaching situations, to give the reader a clear idea of what the data look like, and to provide some practical examples of how teachers control and organize classroom talk by using utterances with primarily metacommunicative functions.

Extract 1

Consider first the following extract from the beginning of a tape-recorded discussion between a young native English speaking teacher and two French boys, aged twelve. The communication is problematic, and therefore useful for our purposes, in some of the ways discussed above (especially in 4.8). The teacher has been asked to discuss a specific topic, capital punishment, with the pupils. Initiating a discussion is typically more problematic than continuing it once it is underway. Consider, for example, the difficulty sometimes caused by having to initiate social contacts and "break the ice" with strangers, and how offering cigarettes and other ruses are often used to oil the embarrassing first moments: in other words, to serve a metacommunicative function of making "contact". But here the teacher

has the added problem of explaining to pupils who do not speak very good English, exactly what is required of them. Almost all his effort is therefore devoted to coaxing along the communication process itself: proposing a topic of discussion, defining terms, inviting the pupils to speak, editing and correcting their language. There is almost nothing he says in this short extract which does not fall into one of these categories of metacommunication. In other words, the whole stretch of talk quoted has a predominantly "contact" function. The primarily metacommunicative functions of the teacher's language are glossed down the right hand side of the page. (The coding scheme proposed in the next chapter will provide a more formalised method of representing such glossing.) For the transcription conventions used see Appendix A.

TRANSCRIPT

METACOMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

T right	attracts pupils' attention
as I was saying - em - -	attracts pupils' attention
the subject of the discussion is	
capital punishment - -	defines topic of discussion
now -	attracts pupils' attention
you don't know what this means - -	checks if pupils understand
capital punishment - - - is when	
- - - a murderer -	defines a term
do you know what a murderer is	
- - -	checks if pupils understand
a murderer	repeats to check understanding
P1 yes	
T if a man kills another man	defines a term
P1 ah yes yes	

T	he is a murderer -	finishes definition
	then - - - when - a murderer is	
	arrested - - - and he has a trial	
	- - - then what happens to him	
	afterwards - - -	invites pupils to speak
	what happens after that	reformulates to check understanding
P1	he has a punishment	
T	yes	accepts pupil's answer as appropriate
	he is punished	alters pupil's language
P1	punished	
T	now - - -	attracts pupils' attention
	what punishment do you think	
	he should get	invitation to speak
P2	prison	
T	prison	accepts pupil's answer or shows attention
P2	((makes strangling gesture)) ⁶	
T	can you tell what - explain	explicit invitation to speak, clarify, put into words
P2	they put a rot	
T	a rope	corrects pupil's English
P2	a rope - - - around his neck	
T	yes	accepts pupil's answer
P2	and hang him	
T	and hang him	repeats to accept pupil's answer or to check his own understanding

⁶ I was present at all recording sessions, taking notes on obvious nonverbal communication.

T so ah we've got two different ideas

here

summarises situation reached

In this fairly extreme, and for that reason all the more revealing example (i.e. theoretical sample), one can see very clearly some of the verbal strategies which a native speaker of English employs to try and "keep in touch" with a foreign speaker, and which a teacher employs to "keep in touch" with pupils.

Extract 2

(From a lesson on different varieties of English. The teacher is trying to get the pupils to explain what a "telling off" means.)

T . . . but how would you be speaking - to a person you were telling off - Renaud - about time I heard your voice this morning - - - so wake up - it's not very difficult you know this - - - for even you - - come on Renaud - - show some sparks of life (4) s'pose I am telling you off - how would I be speaking to you (5) do you understand or have you been lost by the wayside somewhere - - do you understand what I am saying - well then come on (7) we're all waiting Renaud (2) it's not very difficult this (5) well for example would I be speaking to you very very sweetly - - if I were telling you off - - in a very very friendly way (4)

P1 no

T what - pardon - - well speak up - don't speak to your hand - your hand is not very interested in this - - we are - - again

P1 no

T no well how would I be speaking then (7) how would I be speaking - if I were telling you off (4) which I'm going to do in about two minutes if you don't wake up - - - all right Richard

P2 eh first when you are telling someone off you are angry
 T to tell someone off
 P2 to tell someone off you are angry
 T angry right good - ok stop - . . .

In this extract, the teacher is exerting most of his effort in metacommunicative control over who speaks and when. He is trying, patently unsuccessfully, to get a pupil to speak, to contribute to the lesson. He is using one of the crudest strategies available to elicit talk from a pupil: telling him directly to contribute to the talk in the classroom. An initial request to say something is followed by a long sequence of prompts: direct, then ironic, then relenting with a clue which indicates the kind of thing the teacher wants the pupils to say. When he finally does manage to elicit an answer from a different pupil, he immediately stops that pupil contributing further to the talk!

Extract 3

(From a lesson, with a different teacher, also on varieties of English.

The teacher is discussing the expression "talking shop".)

T . . . d'you understand what talking shop means

P1 (uninterpretable)

T talking shop

(several pupils mumbling in the background)

it's not talking about a shop - if that's what you're thinking

P2 someone who was going to buy in a certain shop ()

P3 talking in a shop

T no not talking in a shop - talking shop is em - you have a situation where two people - - - who are doing the same job - - -

T you understand

P mm

T ehm - - - talk - - - about their job - - - d'you understand - em

P3 they go in a shop but not in the same

T it's nothing to do with a shop you see - - - it's two people in any job - - - you understand - - and em - - they talk about their job - - - you see - so you could have - - a businessman - - and a businessman in the same firm - two businessmen in the same firm talk shop - - - two footballers playing for the same team talk shop - two prime ministers would talk shop - - you see - - so how d'you think they're going to - speak . . .

This teacher is trying to explain the meaning of the expression "talking shop". Most of his difficulty seems to stem from his failure to realise that his pupils do not hear the distinction between "shop" and "job", which sound very similar to French ears. But having probably failed to realise the source of the difficulty, the teacher has in any case only one strategy to try and find out what the pupils do understand: namely, to ask them, "do you understand?" or "you see?". Many teachers try to check on their pupils' understanding, often as frequently as this one, but similarly have only this one rather barren strategy at their disposal.

Extract 4

(The teacher is getting the class to identify a passage of English and say where it could have come from. He has given his opinion that the passage was spoken by the plaintiff in a courtroom.)

T . . . mm - Colin - you don't think it is - well where is it then

- P I think it's an inspector speaking to the person who's in the accident - she's quite upset - - -
- T do you (5) well who is speaking then who says this action arises out of a motor accident - a person . a woman who is very upset . after just being involved in an accident - - - would not speak like this she would be pausing far more often - - this is definitely someone who is in authority or someone who is giving evidence - in my opinion (4) have you any more points you can back your - theory up with - - - 'cause if not . you know - the class isn't going to know what to believe - - really - - if you make a statement Colin you must have . three or four good points . with which you can back it up - - . . .

This exchange is problematic from the teacher's point of view for different reasons. The teacher invites a pupil to challenge his own interpretation. But, having invited a challenge, the teacher seems momentarily thrown by the pupil's response. He replies with an abrupt "do you?" and a long pause. The teacher then counterattacks with one of the strongest weapons for controlling conversation: he claims that the pupil's contribution should be disregarded since it does not obey the rules of the game. He challenges the pupil's interpretation by reference to a rule of classroom talk which he formulates explicitly. The rule is that pupils must be able to justify whatever they say by backing it up "with three or four good points". I will comment further on this exchange, especially on how the teacher invokes an explicit rule of classroom talk, in 8.5.

These four extracts provide initial examples of how teachers control and organise the situation of talk in the classroom: by

defining terms and topics of discussion; by trying to elicit talk from a pupil; by trying to check on pupils' understanding; and by making explicit one of the constraints which operate on classroom talk. My brief comments on these extracts are in no sense meant to be definitive. Many other forms of ordering are being accomplished in addition to the (partly dysfunctional) ordering devices which I have suggested are displayed in the extracts. The extracts are given merely as initial examples of teachers organizing classroom talk by referring to that talk.

Extract 5

I have implied so far that it is always the teacher who uses talk with metacommunicative functions. This is generally so. But there are exchanges in the data where the pupils make a bid to take over the control of the talk, as it were.

Contrast the extracts of teacher-pupil talk above with the following extract between another native English speaking teacher and two older French pupils, aged seventeen. The main point to be noted about the following extract is that the pupils use language which has clear metacommunicative functions - in other words they use language which is normally restricted to the teacher. The teacher still uses language to try and direct the discussion, although he lets some mistakes go without comment. But the pupils are also spontaneously using language to object, to refer back to things that they have previously said, to define terms they have used, to sum up their own position, to question the teacher's summary of what they have said, and to question his right to ask certain questions. This means that the teaching situation is more like what we understand by

a genuine discussion, with the participants on an equal footing. On the other hand, the situation is problematic for the teacher, since his position is threatened, and this is reflected in the way he has lost his casualness in the sense that he hesitates, repeats words and phrases, and makes several false starts.

(A discussion on corporal punishment has been underway for about ten minutes.)

T you don't think corporal punishment is eh - - - in a school -
you think corporal punishment is all right at home - - but eh -
but not in a school

P1 no I don't say that - I said until a certain level the cane I am
against

T until a certain level I don't understand you

P1 ah yes I explained ten minutes ago

T well I still don't - until a certain level I don't - I don't
quite understand what you mean

P1 the cane I am against slaps I am for

T oh - yeah - - - I see

P2 I can't agree - if eh a smack can do nothing

T a slap

P2 a slap can do nothing if eh - I don't know - a text to learn by
heart do nothing

T you think that a text is just the same thing - thing to give eh
- - something like em - - lines - - to write out or to learn -
it's just the same thing

P2 it's not the same thing - I don't say that - it has no more effect

T it has no more effect

(The discussion continued with P2 telling a story about a friend of a friend who had committed suicide after being corporally punished in school. The teacher brought the discussion to a close as follows.)

T would you like to eh say - sum up what you think about - -
corporal punishment in general

P1 in general

T like to sum up yeah - what you think now after this discussion
- - - in a few words to say - - - what you think

P1 I am always of the same opinion - I am against

T you're against corporal punishment

P1 yes

T and eh

P1 there are we have too many bad consequences in the future for - -

P2 but I keep the same opinion as the eh

T you have the same opinion

P2 yes because what you said - what you said - what you told us it's
nothing I have destroyed - for me I think that - it seems that -
it seems for me that with the last example that I give you all
your opinions are com - all your em - - -

T arguments

P2 arguments are completely destroyed

T for you

P2 yes I think

T well I think we'll leave it at that

The discussion ended at this point. Having provided the pupil with the word he needs to complete his attack, the teacher simply breaks off discussion with a conventional phrase. The loss of

casualness throughout the teacher's speech in this extract indicates a break in the routines. As Hymes (1962) says:

"In general, instances of the breaking off of communication or uneasiness in it, are good evidence of a rule or expectation about speaking . . ."

If people feel uneasy when one thing happens, then they had expectations that something else could have, or should have, happened in its place. So the extract illustrates another way in which the study of problematic communication situations or of miscommunication is fruitful (cf 4.8): a useful way of working out the rules which hold in a speech situation, if there is no direct way to observe them, is to study what happens when they are broken. In chapter 8 I will use such examples as one way of formulating rules, norms or expectations of appropriate teacher-pupil talk.

These five extracts have been quoted and discussed, in order to illustrate that utterances with the kind of metacommunicative functions that I propose, can be recognised and isolated in talk recorded in its social context. In other words it is possible to link sociolinguistic concepts to conversational data collected by tape-recording or by field notes. To repeat, Hymes' concepts of speech functions have generally been discussed only at the level of cultural patterns of behaviour, and not illustrated from specific interactions. Having illustrated discursively a type of language which, to some extent at least, characterises teacher-talk, I will now present a more systematic way of describing such language-use. This description will further break down Hymes' concepts of "contact", "metalinguistic" and "poetic" functions, and the concept that people "monitor" each others' social behaviour.

CHAPTER 6

TEACHING AS A SPEECH EVENT

II: A CODING SCHEME

6.1. A CODING SCHEME FOR METACOMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS IN TEACHER-TALK

I will now present a more systematic schema of different kinds of metacommunication which have emerged from studying transcripts of tape-recordings and observational notes of teacher-pupil interaction. Some of the examples used here are from field-notes taken during a "normal" teaching situation: English lessons in a Scottish secondary school. Others are from the recordings with English teachers and French pupils.

I will give a brief description of the function or work done by each kind of utterance, and one or more examples. In practice the function of a particular utterance is highly context bound, in ways I have already discussed (see 5.3). Also, not all utterances fit neatly into one category or another, and utterances may do more than one kind of work simultaneously. This is in the nature of language in use. I ignore such problems for the time being, and discuss them fully in chapters 7 and 8. So again, this list, which is presented in rather summary form, is not intended to be definitive. It is intended to indicate, in taxonomic fashion, the wide range of ways in which teachers may control classroom talk by referring to that talk. This section may therefore be read as a coding manual for use with transcripts of teacher-pupil talk.

Although the categories are intended for coding transcripts of tape-recorded lessons, they are not designed to code everything a teacher says. By definition, they code only utterances with metacommunicative functions. However, as I have already illustrated informally on extracts from transcriptions, such talk forms a considerable percentage of what teachers say to their pupils. This can be seen more fully by studying the transcript of a whole coded lesson reproduced in Appendix 2. Such talk is also, in various ways, basic to the notion of "teaching" as people understand this: I discuss this fully in chapters 7 and 9. Some of the categories imply, or are subcategories of, others; i.e. there is built-in multiple coding. The definitions of the categories should therefore be read in conjunction with the hierarchical model immediately after the coding scheme.

<u>LABEL</u>	<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>FUNCTION/DEFINITION</u>	<u>EXAMPLES</u>
ATTRACT ATTENTION	aa	To open or prolong communication, to attract or hold the attention of other participants. To signal a new focus of attention in the talk, or to recall flagging attention.	"Right!" "Listen!" "Now, . . . " "Well, . . . " "Now, don't start now, just listen."
SHOW ATTENTION	sa	To confirm continued interest in what another speaker is saying; to confirm continued	"Yeah." "Mhm." "Uhuh." (With neutral low falling intonation.)

		"auditory presence" ¹ and attention.	
TOPIC	t	To focus on a particular topic of discussion; to place limits on what may be discussed.	"Let's go on a bit further." "OK that's about - that's really all we can say for that."
ACCEPT	ac	To accept another speaker's contribution to the talk as appropriate, relevant, etc.	(Teachers typically fulfil this function by repeating what a pupil has said, usually with low falling intonation. This is often replaced or combined with: "right"; "good"; "fine"; "ok"; etc.
EXAMPLE	ex	To provide an example of a statement that has been made, to clarify what has been said, or to help hearers to see the structure, order, logical progression, etc., of the dialogue.	Utterances with this function are frequently marked with: "For example ... ", "Say ... ", "Perhaps ... ", "Possibly ... ", "I mean, take ...", "Or there again ...".

¹ I have borrowed this phrase from Crystal and Davy (1969).

EDIT TOPIC	edt	To comment on the relevance or appropriateness or correctness of a speaker's contribution to the talk. (Whether this is a positive or negative value judgement seems less important than the fact that relevance is monitored as such.)	"Good!" "Fine!" "Now, we don't want any silly remarks."
ELICIT JUSTI- FICATION	elj	To ask or demand that a speaker justify his contribution to the talk, e.g. by making more explicit why his contribution is appropriate or relevant.	"Yes, that's right - do you know why?" "Why do you say that?" "Have you any more points you can back your - theory up with?"
ELICIT (SPEECH)	el	To invite, request or order that someone speak or contribute to the talk; the invitation may be general or addressed to an individual ² ; to exert control over the amount of speaking in the situation and over who does the speaking.	"Does anyone have anything to add?" "Daniel, what were you going to say?" "Yes, Colin - did you want to say something? No? Just scratching?"

² Clearly, this could be split into two categories if required.

PROMPT	pr	To reinforce an utterance with an <u>el</u> function; to demand a response, a contribution to the talk. (By definition this is a bound function and can occur only in the sequences: el(pr), elcl(pr) or els(pr).)	<p>"Come on. Hurry up."</p> <p>"It's not difficult you know."</p> <p>"About time I heard your voice this morning."</p>
CLUE	clue	To give a hint or clue of what another speaker is expected to say in contributing to the talk; to therefore make an appropriate response to an elicit utterance more likely. (This is similarly a bound function: e.g. el(clue).) ³	<p>"Well, I'm going to help you, a word beginning with A."</p> <p>"One very obvious one - - - so obvious you're probably not thinking about it."</p>
REJECT (SPEECH)	rej	To request, or more usually order, someone not to contribute to the talk.	<p>"Shut up!"</p> <p>"Look I could do with a bit of silence."</p> <p>"Shshshsh."</p> <p>(This function may be fulfilled, especially in nonteaching</p>

³ Outside the classroom, utterances with this function usually occur only in riddles!

			situations, simply by talking over another speaker.)
ELICIT CLARI- FICATION	elcl	To ask a speaker to clarify in some way some- thing that he has said or that someone else had said. (Whether this demand is made of the speaker himself or of another speaker is less important than the fact that clarity of expres- sion is being monitored as such.)	"What do you mean?" "Can anybody put that in a different way?"
ELICIT SUMMARY	els	To ask a speaker to sum- marise the meaning or gist of something that has been said or the state of the discussion. ⁴	"Would you like to sum up what we've been saying?"
CHECK OWN UNDER- STANDING	ownu	To check whether the speaker understands what	"Pardon?" "What do you mean?"

⁴ Such utterances are really meta-metacommunication. The structure of a metacommunicative remark is: a comment on (the talk). For example if a teacher summarises a point, he is: giving a summary of (part of the talk). If a teacher asks a pupil for a summary, he is: eliciting (a summary of (part of the talk)).

		speakers have said.	"Say that again."
CHECK OTHERS' UNDER- STANDING	othu	To check whether other speakers have understood something that has been said.	"Do you get me?" "Do you understand?" "D'you see?" "Who doesn't understand what that means? - doesn't - what does it mean then?"
CLARIFY	cl	To clarify the meaning of something that has been said.	"That means . . . "
SUMMARY	s	To summarise the gist, the meaning of something that has been said, or the state of a whole discussion, perhaps emphasising the central point or structure of the discussion.	"So you mean simply that . . . " "And so here again you will have a different way of approach."
EDIT LANGUAGE	edlg	To draw attention to the actual language form that a speaker has used, explicitly or by repeating words or expressions.	"That's not English." "P: Sometimes faster. T: <u>Sometimes</u> faster, yes."

CORRECT LANGUAGE	clg	To correct or alter in some way the language form that a speaker has used.	"You should say ... " "More slowly, not 'slowlier'."
NAME	n	To give or ask for, or otherwise draw attention to a name, term, verbal label, definition, etc., i.e. to draw attention to the form or meaning of specific expression.	"What do we call this?" "What does this word mean?" "'Respect' this is the word I wanted to come out earlier but it didn't." "This kind of thing we call 'gossiping'."

All the categories defined above have to do with metacommunication. They are therefore closely related. They appear to be linked as in the diagram on page 147. Terms in upper case are the category labels. Terms in lower case are not coding categories, but linking categories to make the structure of the diagram clearer, by specifying control over different aspects of the communication situation. The lines on the model show necessary connections between the coded functions. If an utterance is coded low down on the hierarchy, it automatically serves all the functions at nodes dominating that function. This provides a partial formalisation of the inevitable multi-functional nature of language in use. To take one example, according to the structure of the model, all codable utterances will serve both ATTRACT ATTENTION and SHOW ATTENTION functions. This follows logically from the definitions of the functions. If a teacher, say, is controlling the talk, he must both be attracting the

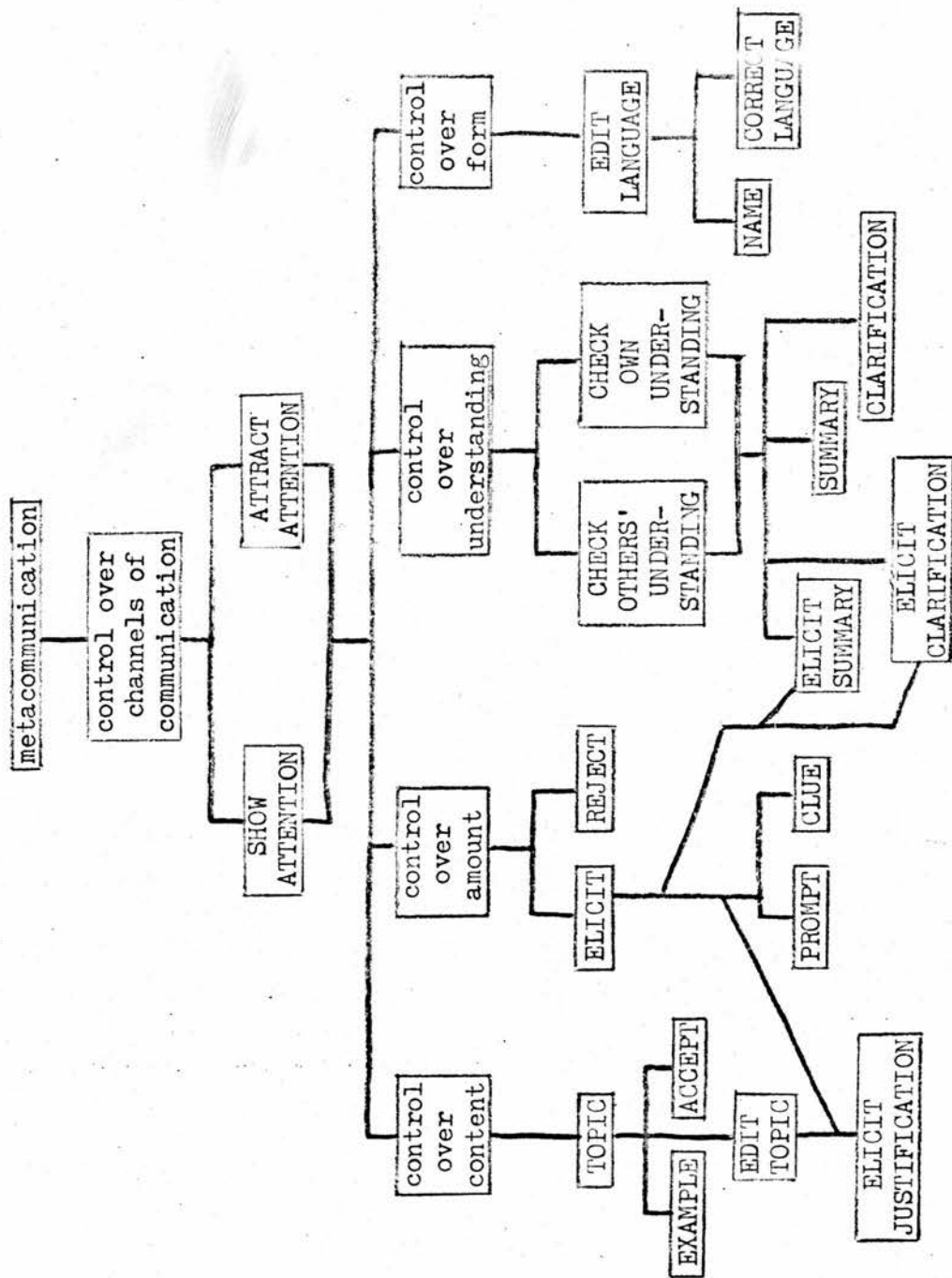


Diagram: Relations between the coding categories

pupils' attention (otherwise he could not control them) and also show he is paying attention to them (since he could not control their talk without monitoring it). In general then, the connections in the diagram are logical connections.

There is nothing to prevent utterances being multi-coded on top of the built-in multiple coding. For example if a teacher asks if pupils understand a particular term, this would serve othu and n functions, since he is both checking on understanding and also drawing attention to a particular word. There will be specific examples below, in extract 9, of a teacher trying to elicit particular words, i.e. using utterances with el/n functions.

Not all utterances fall neatly into the discrete categories proposed. For example, there is a continuum from SHOW ATTENTION through ACCEPT to EDIT TOPIC, i.e. from simply confirming attention and continued interest, through accepting specific contributions from another speaker, to actually commenting on their relevance. Such coding problems will be discussed more fully in chapter 8, especially in 8.2.

The model shows therefore one small aspect of how speech acts may be hierarchically ordered, and how, for example:

"a question may be seen as a request for information, which is in turn interpreted as a request for action, which may appear on a higher level as a challenge" (Labov 1970).⁵

Note for the present a final feature of the coding categories, that utterances with some of the functions proposed will be found in a wide range of speech situations, whilst others are more or less

⁵ Stubbs 1973:26-33 gives a different type of example of this "layered" interpretation of an utterance as, simultaneously, a request for clarification and a challenge. See Appendix E.

restricted to teaching. In this latter category are: ac, edt, pr, clue, els, edlg, clg, n. The functions not restricted to teaching situations may nevertheless be realised in a characteristic way by teachers. I will not discuss this except incidentally. My main point for the present is to emphasise the sheer amount and range of such control over content, form, understanding and amounts of talk, which teachers may exert over the speech situation in the classroom.

6.2. SOME ELICITING SEQUENCES IN TEACHER-TALK

The kind of analysis I have proposed so far has assigned underlying functions to isolated utterances on an intuitive basis. I have given no criteria for recognising the boundaries of such functional units. Nor have I specified how such units occur in characteristic and recognisable sequences.

There is very little work in the literature on the sequential ordering of speech acts, or of comparable functional units, in multi-party spoken discourse. Work which has looked at linguistic units above sentence level has concentrated almost exclusively on links between items of syntactic structure (e.g. Hasan 1968 on grammatical cohesion, see 8.4 below). Only very recently have certain conversational analysts begun to study a few recurrent conversational sequences such as question-answer (Sacks 1967-72, Churchill n.d.), summons-answer (Schegloff 1968) and greeting-greeting (Sacks 1967-72). Sinclair et al (1972) and Bellack et al (1966) are the only attempts at a sequential structural analysis of teacher-pupil talk at the level of functional discourse acts. (Cf 3.8, 3.9.)

This section will simply indicate ways in which the coding scheme proposed may be used to investigate an aspect of sequential ordering

in classroom talk. It will propose some specific patterns, but will not explore the topic in detail.

It is not necessarily useful to use a coding scheme simply to code long stretches of transcribed teacher-pupil interaction, automatically and perhaps superficially. Rather than illuminating the structure of the interaction, the effect may be to fragment the talk, and to make it more difficult to see what is going on, rather than to explain anything. By definition, coding schemes are taxonomic: they classify, list, fragment, reify, compartmentalize, force continua into discrete boxes, and chop up processes. A coding scheme can however help to reveal processes, if it is used to bring out recurrent patterns in the talk, which are not evident without the simplification which it necessarily forces on the data.

I quote below some further sequences of teacher-pupil talk, and code them, according to the scheme proposed above, in order to bring out some patterns in the talk. The patterns are examples of what Hymes (1971a) calls "linguistic routines":

"sequential organisations beyond the sentence, either as activities of one person, or as the interaction of two or more persons."

Not all teacher-pupil talk shows such clear patterns as the sequences below. But by deliberately choosing sequences where the pattern is clear, this can help to reveal the pattern underlying similar sequences where it may be present but obscured.⁶ The relatively pure sequences below, which are genuine in spite of their sometimes stereotypical quality, are therefore used to derive ideal type patterns of teacher-pupil interaction. These ideal patterns can in turn be used

⁶ This is then a further example of theoretical sampling. Cf 4.6.

to generate acceptable, if slightly wooden, classroom dialogue.

Note that the patterns isolated consist of sequences of functional slots. This is also the level at which Goffman (1971) has provided a few fragmentary analyses of interaction sequences, greetings and "supportive" and "remedial interchanges", and also the level at which conversational sequencing has begun to be studied by Sacks (1972b), Schegloff (1968) and Schegloff & Sacks (1973). (I ignore for the present whether the analysis below is in other ways equivalent in status to the analyses of Sacks and Schegloff.)

As examples of characteristic "linguistic routines" in teacher-pupil talk, I will concentrate on "eliciting sequences", i.e. almost stereotypical sequences in which the teacher is trying to elicit answers from pupils, using various strategies of prompting and giving clues, and different ways of indicating that the pupil's answer is an appropriate or irrelevant contribution to the classroom dialogue.

I begin with an extract which I have already quoted above and commented on briefly.

Extract 6⁷

T	. . . but how would you be speaking - to a person you	
	were telling off - Renaud -	el
	about time I heard your voice this morning - - -	pr
	so wake up -	pr
	it's not very difficult you know this - - -	pr
	for even you - -	pr
	come on . Renaud - -	pr

⁷ I will continue to number longish extracts sequentially throughout the study.

	show some sparks of life (4)	pr
	s'pose I am telling you off - how would I be speaking to you (5)	el
	do you understand . or have you been lost by the wayside somewhere - -	othu
	do you understand what I am saying -	othu
	well then come on (7)	pr
	we're all waiting Renaud (2)	pr
	it's not very difficult this (5)	pr
	well for example would I be speaking to you very very sweetly - - if I were telling you off - - in a very very friendly way (4)	clue
P	no	<u>PR</u> ⁸
T	what - pardon - -	ownu
	well speak up -	pr
	don't speak to your hand -	edlg
	your hand is not very interested in this - - we are - -	pr
	again	pr
P	no	<u>PR</u>
T	no well how would I be speaking then	ac elj

The main sequential pattern is very clear here. It is:

el → pr → pr → pr → . . . PR

After a while the teacher relents and gives the pupil a clue. So the pattern becomes:

⁸ PR = pupil response. For the other abbreviations see the coding scheme in 6.1 above.

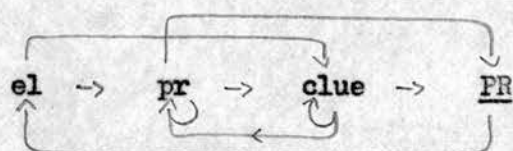
el → pr → pr → . . . clue → pr → . . . PR

Or more succinctly:

el → pr → clue → PR

The arrows are to be read as indicating another instance of the same act, not as a return to the same utterance.

Note that this pattern will describe or generate sequences other than the specific one in this extract. It seems intuitively clear that one could find sequences to fit all the variations of:



This is a composite diagram. In practice, all the possible sequences are unlikely to occur within a single piece of talk.

Extract 7

The sequence el → pr → clue is a common one. Here is another example.

T	what is to overtake . in a car	n/el
P	to go	<u>PR</u>
T	to overtake -	n/othu
	hands up -	el
	not very difficult this (?)	pr
	I am driving at twenty miles per hour - and the pe .	
	person behind me is driving at fifty miles per hour	
	what happens	clue
P	he overtakes you	<u>PR</u>
P	he overtakes you	<u>PR</u>

P	he passes you	<u>PR</u>
T	he . will pass me yes he overtakes (3)	ac ac

The following extracts illustrate some common strategies which teachers have of indicating to pupils that their contributions to the classroom talk are either appropriate or irrelevant.

Extract 8

T	why is why has . sports commentator got to be enthusiastic during a football match (7)	el
	quite an obvious reason really - - -	clue (or pr?)
	richard	el
P	it's to be interesting - for to interest somebody	<u>PR</u>
T	yes it has to be interesting	ac
	but also a sermon has to be interesting	edt
P	yes but it's not for the - same kind of eh person because*	<u>PR</u>
T	yes	ac
P	generally I think that eh - - sports commen commentary it's at the tv	<u>PR</u>
T	yes	ac
P	and it's for a lot of people	<u>PR</u>
T	yes	ac
P	perhaps only ()	<u>PR</u>
T	yes . very good	ac edt
P	and at the church there is only - - a group of people	<u>PR</u>
T	yes	ac
P	and they are here to - in the church to - to think - but eh for a football match (it's not) to think - it's	

to see what's happening PR

T yes - ac

you still haven't answered the question though . really edt

P in a football match you are two - (two groups) two teams
 which are () to make a football match
 someone is for the team A - and some others for the
 team B - and there is a () PR

T yes ac

P (I know that B is) and ()
 I don't know they are the best PR

T yes . good ac edt

P instead of the church - - - they () something PR

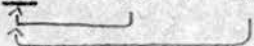
T mm - good - ac edt

so in a football match then a commentator is very
 enthusiastic - and - as you say . interesting a very
 large - number - of people - - - s

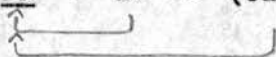
The main pattern in this extract is:

el -> PR -> ac

or

el -> PR -> ac -> edt


The summary at the end of the quoted sequence functions partly to indicate that the teacher has elicited all he wants to at this stage, and therefore to close this sequence:

el -> PR -> ac -> (edt) -> s


Bracketed items are optional.

Very similar to the sequence illustrated above, would be:

el → PR → ac
↑

This sequence will be illustrated in the next extract.

Patterns so far isolated could be combined further to give:

el → pr → clue → PR → ac → edt → s
↑

Plus the various other loops already illustrated.

Extract 9

(From Walker and Adelman, 1972. I take this extract from the recordings of other researchers, as it shows a stereotypical pattern more clearly than any sequences which I have found in my own data.)

T well anytime you taste sweat and tears, why
does it seem to taste about the same level
of saltiness? - - -

el

blood - - - well think back to before we
could think back. Before we were able to
think.

clue

P came from the sea

PR

T came where?

ownu?

P from the sea

PR

T what came from the sea?

elcl

P fish

PR

T all the - - - what?

el/n

Ps animals. living things

PR

(1)

T all living things as far as we know

ac

	and everything happened in - - - what?	el/n	
P	in stages	PR	(2)
T	in stages yes	ac	
	but everything happened, it happened in what?	el/n	
P	in the sea. evolution	PR	(3)
T	yes evolution originally happened in the sea	ac	
	OK	ac	
	so all the life originated in what sort of environment surroundings?	els/n	
P	water	PR	(4)
T	what sort of water?	ac/elcl	
Ps	salt salty water	PR	(5)
T	salt water yes	ac	
	in fact all the processes that go on in our bodies must go on in water	s?	
	in - - - what's the word	el/n	
	things in the water - - - dissolved in water - - - all the reactions	clue	
P	saturated	PR	
T	well that's if you get too much	edt	
P	solution	PR	
T	yes good	ac/edt	
	in solution	ac	

Walker and Adelman comment that the teacher here is "focussing" - that he wants specific words from the class, and that overall the definition is high. By using the coding categories one can see more

clearly the rigid sequences of language functions that the teacher's speech is serving. The main pattern is:

T elicits → P responds → T shows attention and accepts
response as appropriate by
repeating P's words

el → PR → ac
↑

Sometimes, the teacher combines his acceptance of the pupil's response with a more explicit comment in its relevance (e.g. "yes good"):

el → PR → ac/edt
↑

The teacher is trying to elicit particular words, so more precisely the sequence is:

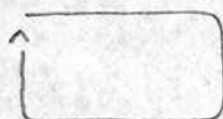
el/n → PR → ac(edt)
↑

This sequence is repeated three times in immediate succession at the points marked (1), (2) and (3). And with a slight overlap, because of the demand for a clarification, at (4) and (5). Almost the whole sequence can be represented by:

el → (clue) → PR → el/n → (clue) → PR → ac(edt)
↑

The sequence is varied slightly by clues and summaries at appropriate points.

It is interesting to look simply at the abstract pattern underlying the sequences of language functions which I have isolated. The basic pattern is



or



The rest is mere variation on this theme - loops within loops, as it were. So already, these patterns provide a partial formalisation of the strangely repetitious nature of much teacher-pupil talk. Such an analysis also provides a formal representation of one way in which teachers keep control over sequences of classroom talk. The loops always return to a teacher's elicit utterance, or to a prompt or clue, which are subcategories of elicit (see diagram in 6.1). That is to say, the loops always return to a point in the dialogue from which the teacher can control the talk.

Various other notations are of course possible for representing such linguistic routines. Linguists might be more familiar with a representation such as the following:

If we call the linguistic routines described ELICIT,
then

ELICIT \rightarrow el (pr^n) ($clue^n$) + PR (ac) (edt)

pr + clue \Rightarrow clue + pr

ELICIT \Rightarrow ELICIT + ELICIT

where

\rightarrow = rewrite

\Rightarrow = optional transformation

() = optional

n = can recur any number of times

The other variations on this pattern can be similarly represented. Sinclair et al (1972) develop this type of analysis much further than I have taken it here.

This section has, then, simply indicated one way in which the coding scheme can be used to study a pervasive structural feature of teacher-pupil talk: namely that much classroom talk consists of

recursive linguistic routines in which an important element of the sequential chaining is not from utterance to utterance, but fixed in advance for the whole speech event, in terms of underlying functional slots. Such an analysis also illustrates one way in which a teacher may retain control over the classroom talk.

6.3. THE ODDITY OF TEACHER-TALK

I conclude this chapter by commenting on the uniqueness of the kinds of features which I have isolated as characterising teacher-talk. Any kind of stylistic description is meaningful only if it is comparative. There is little point in trying to describe one "style" of speech in isolation, since there is no way of knowing what implications features of speech have, unless one also knows in what other styles these features occur, or how unique they are.

The subject of the last two chapters has been: what are some of the verbal means by which teachers accomplish order in classroom dialogue? All speech events - casual conversations, formal debates, lectures, arguments, or whatever - require their participants to do work to keep them organized. I have not suggested that teacher-pupil talk is special in this respect, only that certain devices are used more frequently by teachers to accomplish conversational order in the classroom. I have shown how teachers develop the classroom dialogue by using parts of that dialogue as a resource for further comment and talk. No attempt has been made to set up "teacher-talk" as an entirely discrete category of language-use, since all talk is ordered by cues for turn-taking, attention seeking, clarifications, proposing topics for discussion, and so on.

The phenomenon that I have discussed here under the label of "metacommunication" has also been pointed out by Garfinkel and Sacks (1970:350). They talk of "formulating" a conversation as a feature of that conversation. (Cf 2.5.1, where I related this concept to metacommunication and to other concepts such as expositives.)

"A member may treat some part of the conversation as an occasion to describe that conversation, to explain it, or characterise it, or explicate, or translate, or summarize, or furnish the gist of it, or take note of its accordance with rules, or remark its departure from rules. That is to say, a member may use some part of the conversation as an occasion to formulate the conversation . . .".

I have given many examples of these different kinds of formulating in teacher-talk. Garfinkel and Sacks go on to point out that to describe explicitly what one is about in a conversation, during that conversation, is generally regarded as boring, incongruous, inappropriate, pedantic, or devious. But in teacher-talk, features of speech do provide stories worth the telling. I have shown that teachers do regard as matters for competent and appropriate remarks such matters as: the fact that somebody is speaking, the fact that another can hear, and whether another can understand. Stereotypical teacher-remarks are of the form: "Use your ears!"; "Johnny, you're talking again!"; or "Are you still with us? Or have you been lost by the wayside somewhere?" Whatever other functions (e.g. 'being sarcastic') such remarks serve simultaneously, they serve to "formulate" the conversation.

This oddity of teacher-talk can be illustrated with the help of the conversations which Alice has in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass with the Caterpillar and with Humpty Dumpty. Alice constantly complains about the strange speech behaviour she has to put up with from the other characters: they contradict her, and seem

rather finnickily about what she says, rather than about what she clearly "means".⁹ Yet the conversations that Alice has, especially with the Caterpillar and with Humpty Dumpty, look suspiciously like a parody of the kind of classroom dialogue I have been describing. At a superficial level, the Caterpillar tells Alice to recite a poem; and she does sums with Humpty Dumpty. But the parallels go deeper than that. What seems to annoy Alice most is that the characters take it upon themselves to organize the conversations as they see fit. Humpty Dumpty is particularly sure of himself when it comes to organizing talk:

"However, this conversation is going on a little too fast: let's go back to the last remark but one."

"I'm afraid I can't quite remember it," said Alice very politely.

"In that case we may start fresh," said Humpty Dumpty, "and it's my turn to choose a subject -".

The gist of this chapter has been that such speech acts are the very stuff of teaching. Alice's anger at being contradicted, as she sees it, stems from her having such conversational demands made on her in a non-teaching situation. In chapter 8 I discuss the expectations associated with such language-use which could start to explain Alice's anger and feeling of inappropriateness.

Teaching is not so "odd" however as to be the only speech situation, which is constantly organized by metacommunication. Labov (1972a) shows how such metacomments are also an integral part of an

⁹ The March Hare is particularly hot on this point:

"... you should say what you mean," the March Hare went on.

"I do," Alice hastily replied; 'at least - at least I mean what I say . . .'" (p.73).

otherwise very different speech event in American Negro culture: "sounding" or "playing the dozens". Sounding takes various forms, but consists essentially of sequences of ritual insults which speakers direct at each other, in an attempt to be more original, funnier, slicker, or more obscene than their conversational protagonists. Labov writes:

"One of the most important differences between sounding and other speech events is that most sounds are evaluated overtly and immediately by the audience. . . . There is also considerable explicit discussion of sounds themselves. . . . Members will also make meta-comments on the course of a sounding session . . . or announce their intention . . . 'Aw, tha's all right, now I'm gonna sound on you.' . . . In a sounding session, everything is made public - nothing significant happens without drawing comment." (My emphases.)

Certain formal structural features are therefore shared by the otherwise very different speech events of teaching and sounding. The structure of both depends on many metacomments¹⁰ on the talk during the talk, on many of the metacomments being evaluative, and on all the talk being public.

In order to make direct comparisons between types of metacomments which characterize speech recorded in different social situations, it is possible of course to use the coding scheme set out above.¹¹ As one brief example of this, I reproduce part of an interview and code it. It will be intuitively obvious that interviewing has certain organisational similarities with teaching: one speaker generally has the right to control the direction along which the talk develops, and wishes to elicit certain information, and to elicit clarifications

¹⁰ One of the obvious differences between the speech events is that in sounding any speaker can make evaluative comments, whilst in teaching this right is generally restricted to the teacher.

¹¹ The results of using the scheme to code the conversation between Alice and the Caterpillar, are interesting.

about that information. It is interesting that when informants were asked to interpret tape-recordings of teaching and interviewing situations as part of the experiment, described below in chapter 9, they tended to confuse the two.

Extract 10

(From an interview between a research student and an undergraduate. The transcription was done by the research student. Certain non-essential details have been altered to preserve complete anonymity.)¹²

R = researcher, I = interviewee.

I . . . and it was even before my O-levels that I thought I would like to be a dentist, but I had no idea what it was like.

R So I mean the school took a sort of fairly positive attitude or a fairly ... s/el

I Well fairly negative ...

R Or fairly negative ... sa

I Because nobody else in living memory had ever applied to be a dentist ...

R Ya. sa

I So they didn't know what to do.

R I see. Yeah. sa

Er. Did you - you say that even before you did O-levels you - you wanted to - (sniff) do dentistry? elcl

I Yes. Ya. Um. We had one of these - I suppose it's a careers convention, and um I imagine it's just before

¹² I am grateful to Robin Orme for providing me with this transcript.

you start your O-levels um in order to have to make up
your mind what type of career you're going to choose.
Um. Um. But er so far as I can remember - it's such
a long time ago - it was rather a poor choice I would
have thought: a sort of bankers teachers and doctors.

R Ya. Sa

I That's as far as I can remember.

R Mm. Ya. Sa

Has er I mean did you, has the the the university
sort of how've they come up to your expectations
I mean?

el

I Well that's the set thing, I didn't have any
expectations.

R Ya, so. Sa elcl?

I I didn't know what to expect.

R So it wasn't a problem at all? s/elcl

I No.

R No. Sa

6.4. SUMMARY

Throughout the last two chapters I have given examples of teachers engaged in "monitoring" the classroom speech in situation in different ways, i.e. engaged in using utterances to organize, control, direct, guide, change, define, check up on, and refer to the lines along which classroom talk is allowed to develop. I have demonstrated my points mainly by amassing examples from tape-recorded and field note data.

I earlier criticised Harré and Secord for not taking the monitoring of other people's behaviour to be central in a theory of "social" behaviour. And I have criticised Goffman for not showing what people do when they engage in the "mutual monitoring" which is central to his own definition of a social encounter. Similarly, I have shown that it is possible to illustrate Hymes' concepts of speech functions at the level of specific interactions. But the notions of "contact", "metalinguistic" and "poetic" functions proved too general, and broke down into a large number of different but systematically related verbal strategies.

These two chapters have therefore given an initial demonstration, for one social situation at least, that it is possible to use data collected in their natural social context, to show some of the verbal acts that speakers do when they monitor other speakers. Also I have begun to indicate how such monitoring is central to teaching as a speech event.

So far I have treated this kind of description of speech behaviour as unproblematic. The next two chapters discuss more fully the status of such an analysis.

CHAPTER 7

TEACHING AS A SPEECH EVENT

III: THEORIES OF TEACHING

"When we can say what is being done
with a sentence, then we will be able
to observe how often speakers do it."
(Labov 1970a.)

In the last two chapters, I have assumed that setting up a description of teacher-talk is a relatively unproblematic procedure. I have shown that when a coding scheme based on a concept of speech functions is applied to tape-recorded speech data collected in their social context, then a workable schema turns out to be much more complex than Hymes implies. But I have not raised any theoretical problems with this general method of describing discourse.

In the next three chapters, I want to discuss in more detail what the status of the coding scheme is. In other words, rather than using the coding scheme simply as a means, tool or resource for analysing a large corpus of tape-recorded data, I want to discuss what kind of inexplicit analysis the scheme already embodies. This will in turn provide a more careful formulation of what teachers are doing when they are using metacommunicative utterances. Specifically, the initial notion, presented in the last two chapters, that such metatalk "organises" speech events, will be seen to be oversimplified. Such metacommunication will be seen to convey much more complex messages. So the limitations of one method of description of speech (a category system) will be partly replaced by and compared with

another method (a rule-based system), whose status will in turn be discussed.

This chapter will discuss aspects of the rather global "lay" theory of teaching embodied in the coding scheme. The next chapter will return to specific tape-recorded and observational data on language-use and will formulate some interpretive rules of discourse.

7.1. CODING SCHEMES AS THEORIES OF TEACHING

I want, then, to discuss some aspects of the conceptions of teaching and of knowledge which underlie the kind of teacher-style I have discussed; or, more precisely, people's conceptions of how educational knowledge should be transmitted, and therefore people's theories of what "teaching" consists in. To put this in another way, a teacher's use of language will serve to maintain his definition of the situation, not only by maintaining social control and underpinning social relations (this being implicit in the notion of "organising" the speech event), but also by maintaining a specific concept of what constitutes valid knowledge, and how this knowledge should be put across to pupils. In fact there is no way in which "maintaining social relations" and "transmitting knowledge" can be strictly separated. Bernstein (1971) provides an elegant, if entirely abstract, analysis which links modes of social control to the ways in which knowledge is socially distributed and transmitted. The whole of Young's (1971) collection of articles, in which Bernstein's paper is printed, is in fact an argument that links "knowledge and control": the title of the book. I discuss concepts from Bernstein's paper below.

What I am proposing, then, is a view of teaching; (a) as a speech event, and therefore as the maintenance of teacher and pupil speech behaviour considered by the participants to be appropriate to the situation, and (b) as the selection, organisation and transmission of knowledge, through particular uses of language. At one level, this means an attempt to bring out various implications and underlying messages of teacher-talk, of which teachers themselves may or may not be aware. At another level, it is an attempt at a more powerful definition of what "teaching" means to teachers and pupils. The definition is more powerful because it is grounded in detailed observations of teachers' actual speech behaviour in the classroom. (Chapter 9 will take up this theme from a different angle by discussing pupils' explicit accounts of teaching situations.)

This chapter and the following ones will by no means exhaust all the implications conveyed by the characteristic teacher-talk which I have described. But by using a few specific examples, I will show how very general concepts can be illustrated from the fine details of teachers' actual classroom talk. The general argument will be that teaching methods and assumptions are displayed in discourse structure.

My initial general points in this section will therefore become clearer if I discuss a specific assumption underlying the coding scheme for classroom talk proposed by Flanders, and specific assumptions underlying my own coding scheme as proposed in the last chapter.

7.2. FLANDERS' SYSTEMATIC CODING SCHEME: THE 70 PER CENT TALK RULE

Consider first one assumption as to what "teaching" consists in which underlies Flanders' scheme for coding teacher-pupil talk. Flanders'

coding categories are as follows:

teacher-talk	indirect influence	1. accepts feeling
		2. praises, encourages
		3. accepts, uses student's idea
		4. asks questions
<hr/>		
	direct influence	5. lecturing
		6. giving directions
		7. criticising, justifying authority
<hr/>		
pupil-talk		8. response
		9. initiation
<hr/>		
		10. silence, confusion

(Each category is defined more precisely by Flanders.)

There are many assumptions implicit in this category system, about the significant things which teachers and pupils do. In other words, validating the whole point of the scheme is an intuitive notion of what people regard as appropriate teaching behaviour. To take one clear example: there are seven categories for teacher-talk, all to do with "influencing" pupils, and only two categories for pupil-talk. The first assumption is, then, that "teaching" consists of teachers talking more than pupils, and in more varied ways. This observation would be treated as trivial and obvious by many people: it would be "taken for granted". And it would be denied by many educationalists as an inappropriate concept of teaching. But this is not the point. The categories have been found to be necessary and adequate for coding what participants do in teaching situations: there

is no difficulty in accustoming observers to use the scheme in the relatively formal classrooms for which the scheme is intended.

It should be clear that I am not necessarily criticising Flanders' coding scheme as such. Radical criticisms of the concept of "coding" social behaviour per se are now well known. (See especially Garfinkel 1967, Cicourel 1964, Coulter 1970, 1971.) I raise some of the inherent problems of "coding" speech behaviour in chapter 8. My main point here is simply that the implications of coding schemes such as Flanders' have not been followed up. For the notion inherent in the scheme, that teachers talk more and in more varied ways than pupils, has been corroborated by the analysis of data on hundreds of teachers. In this vast amount of observational research, it has been found that teachers tend to speak for about 70 per cent of the time in the classroom. More precisely: on average, for 70 per cent of the time in the classroom someone is talking, 70 per cent of this talk is teacher-talk, and 70 per cent of teacher-talk consists of lecturing or asking questions (Flanders 1970). These percentages have been found to hold for the type of relatively traditional "talk and chalk" lessons in which it is appropriate to use Flanders' schedule. But it is not pointed out that this is strong empirical evidence for showing that people consider it as a rule or norm of appropriate speech behaviour that, in teaching situations, the teacher talks for approximately 70 per cent of the time. Flanders formulates the "two thirds rule", but does not fit this rule into a wider sociolinguistic framework.

This would however be a normal kind of rule to expect, for there are many other rules or norms of sociolinguistic behaviour which are concerned simply with the amount of speech or silence that are

considered appropriate in different social situations or from different categories of speakers. To begin with some intuitively obvious examples, it is considered inappropriate for the congregation to speak spontaneously during most British church services, but spontaneous cries may be quite appropriate during revivalist religious gatherings. Babbling babies are considered cute in our society, but gossipy old women are considered slightly disgusting; and the "strong silent type" is, or was, an ideal. Besides such stereotypes, there are various explicit folk rules concerning occasions on which it is appropriate for different categories of people to speak: "Children should be seen and not heard" or "Speak when you're spoken to". And there are various often heard criticisms of persons who speak too much: "she could talk the hind legs off a donkey", "she talks nineteen to the dozen", and "she just likes the sound of her own voice". The use of the feminine pronoun in these last examples is in no sense meant evaluatively, but merely to fit yet another folk stereotype of the fast-talking fishwife: only men can be "strong and silent" in our culture. Robinson (1972:58) gives other examples:

"'There is a time to speak and a time to keep silence'. The rules governing the occasions for silence and speech differ from culture to culture, but all cultures have such rules. In our society these norms will differ from group to group and from situation to situation. Quaker meetings for worship can enjoy an hour's silence, the House of Commons commonly does not. Railway carriages in the south of England have a reputation for respecting privacy; silences of short duration at parties represent failure. Radio stations apparently have to confine their periods of silence to seconds rather than minutes to avoid questioning 'phone calls. . . ."

For data on sociolinguistic expectations regarding speech and silence in other cultures, see Basso (1970) on the interpretation of silence in Apache culture; and Hymes (1967) for ethnographic data on the Paliyan of south India, whose members regard verbal persons as

abnormal, and who tend to speak less and less as they grow older, lapsing into almost complete silence by the age of about forty.

My argument is therefore that the large amount of empirical data on a consistent pattern of talk and silence in teaching situations immediately suggests a rule of speech behaviour which fits into a pattern of other rules of speech behaviour in other speech events. It is not merely that classroom researchers have failed to get as much mileage as they might have done from their work with category systems, by failing to set this work within a wider context of sociolinguistic behaviour. More importantly, a description of language-use is meaningless if it is not set in the context of other styles. Flanders' "two thirds rule" means little until it is seen as one rule among many that have to do with norms for speech versus silence. I take it that the aim in formulating sociolinguistic "rules" is not simply to continue indefinitely formulating and amassing individual rules of speech behaviour, simply because they are there. The aim is to show what type of rules there are, the kinds of social and other knowledge on which they depend, the aspects of speech behaviour governed by such rules, and so on. Rules which apply to only a couple of cases are of no particular interest. What makes such rules seem important is the belief that they could be related in easily imaginable ways to other similar rules, therefore revealing the general principles on which they depend.

In the next chapter, when I formulate various interpretive rules of discourse, I try to link rules that apply to teaching situations with interpretations which are routinely placed on discourse in other social situations.

The failure to link work on classroom language with sociolinguistic work on other speech situations is one example of the mutual isolation which has tended to characterise work on social interaction. (See my discussion of this, especially in chapters 1 and 2.)

Having discussed an aspect of Flanders' coding scheme to show how a very general norm of speech behaviour is displayed in classroom talk, I now return to some of the very general assumptions about teaching which underlie my own proposed coding scheme for teacher-talk.

7.3. TWO ORGANISING FUNCTIONS OF METACOMMUNICATION

I have defined metacommunicative utterances as utterances which refer in various ways to the communication process itself. To summarise, they are utterances whose function is to do a particular kind of work, namely to organise the state of talk itself. They initiate, terminate and smooth out periods of talk, guide messages, change topics and speakers, check on whether messages have been understood, and therefore generally "prop up" and coax along interaction. Utterances with a metacommunicative function are therefore in some sense basic to interaction: they have to do with the structure of discourse itself. Without such work being done, not necessarily by verbal and explicit metacomments, talk would "snarl up". This structuring function served by certain kinds of utterances has been discussed in various places (especially by Goffman 1963 and Sacks 1967-72) and has been briefly discussed by some researchers as particularly distinctive of teacher-talk (Bellack et al 1966, Coulthard et al 1972, Sinclair et al 1972). This characteristic of teacher-talk is however totally ignored by the large amount of work on verbal interaction in

the classroom which has been based on systematic coding schedules, such as Flanders', in which the coding is done according to an arbitrary time-sampling basis, e.g. every three seconds. This is one of the major criticisms of a Flanders-type system, from the point of view of discourse analysis: it totally ignores the natural elements of structure in the talk, although these structuring elements may be precisely the most characteristic feature of that type of discourse.

Utterances with a metacommunicative function do not simply organise and smooth out the talk however: they also perform the function of organising the transmission of knowledge. Clearly, this function would also be basic to language-use in teaching situations. The categories in the proposed coding scheme for metacommunicative functions have to do with such activities as:

specifying topics of discussion; checking on the relevance of topics which pupils introduce; attracting and holding pupils' attention; checking that teacher and pupils understand each other; controlling the amount of pupil-talk; explaining and clarifying; correcting pupils' language; asking for and giving names to things.

By definition, these activities which are specified by the coding scheme have to do with control over the state of classroom talk. But they also make explicit many assumptions about what it is to teach somebody something, assumptions for example:

that only the teacher knows what is relevant to a subject being taught; that pupils have to show they are paying attention to the teacher in order to be learning; that teachers assume that they know when "learning" is going on; that teaching the names of phenomena is valuable in itself;

that phenomena are often required to be explained verbally;
and so on.

None of these assumptions about teaching is self-evident. The general conception of teaching underlying the scheme, of how educational knowledge should be transmitted is a "tell 'em and test 'em" model, to use John Holt's phrase.

The categories of the coding scheme were arrived at intuitively, partly through studying the transcribed data: they were required to cover most of what seemed "typical" teacher-talk. But the formulated categories, originally set up on an unexplicated, intuitive basis, now reveal pedagogical assumptions underlying the teacher-talk. Examining the scheme in this way ^{we} can therefore begin to investigate some of the ways in which I, as researcher, developed the categories from observations among the population I have studied. It makes clear some of the knowledge about teachers and teaching on which I drew in setting up the scheme.

7.4. THE "FRAMING" OF EDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

It is useful to discuss further how educational knowledge is transmitted with reference to Bernstein's (1971) concept of the "framing" of educational knowledge. "Framing" concerns the strength of the boundary between what may and may not be taught. The concept concerns only the form of transmission, and not the content. Strong framing means that the teacher maintains control over selection, organisation, pacing and timing, in the transmission of academic knowledge. Weak framing means that the pupils have some say in how educational knowledge is presented to them. In a weak framing situation, pupils might specify for example that they "would rather do that subject

tomorrow", that they "want something explained again", that they "don't understand", that they "don't see the point of what the teacher is saying". (These are my hypothetical examples: Bernstein gives no illustrative examples at the level of actual talk.) A weak framing situation would therefore be potentially more problematic for a teacher who would not be able to hide behind a well-insulated academic discipline but would constantly have to justify what he was saying. The link which Bernstein makes between methods of transmitting educational knowledge and methods of social control should be clear here.

The concept of framing is clearly closely related to the kind of teacher-talk which is described by the coding scheme of metacommunicative functions of speech. Quite simply, a teacher with a high percentage of cedable talk, would be a strong framer. Situations in which pupils use language with metacommunicative functions (as in extract 5 in 5.4) would be characterised by weaker framing. Here then is another way of characterising some of the underlying messages in the style of language which teachers use. In Bernstein's terms, the pedagogy is a message system. A study of coded teacher-talk in this light might provide a way of exploring in detail, at the level of speech acts, how the "hidden curriculum"¹ (Snyder 1971) is transmitted to students, i.e. how students learn without being told in so many words but through thousands of hours' exposure to teacher-talk what is appropriate pupil behaviour, and how they will be evaluated at the end of the day.

¹ Illich also uses this term, but in a much wider and politically more loaded sense.

Postman and Weingartner (1969:32-33) express the idea of the hidden curriculum as follows:

"What all of us have learned . . . is that it is not important that our utterances satisfy the demands of the question (or of reality), but that they satisfy the demands of the classroom environment. Teacher asks. Student answers. . . . Students . . . get the message. And yet few teachers consciously articulate such a message. It is not part of the 'content' of their instruction. . . . The message is communicated quietly, insidiously, relentlessly and effectively through the structure of the classroom: . . . the rules of (the) verbal game, the rights that are assigned, the arrangements that are made for communication, . . . In other words, the medium is the message. . . . Each of these behaviours (concerning assumptions underlying classroom teaching) is expressed in specific behaviours that are constantly on display throughout our culture."

Whilst such assertions ring true at an intuitive level, a socio-linguist would immediately ask: how does the medium convey its message? by what "structure"? what are the rules of the verbal game? what is there in the language-use that "displays" these messages? what are the "specific behaviours" referred to?

My argument in this chapter has been that part of these messages are conveyed by the large amount of metacommunicative utterances used by teachers. Few writers on the classroom have emphasised how regularly the teacher defines and redefines the situation. Jackson (1968) is one researcher who does make this point very strongly, however. He points out that children spend over a thousand hours a year in school, which comes to some 10,000 hours by the time they leave - at least. And for most of this time the teacher is talking! (Of Flanders' "two thirds" rule above.) Also, school classrooms tend to be rather standardised and routine places: a constant, ritualised, stylised environment.

It would be strange indeed if the very organisation of all this teacher-talk did not hammer home time after time, taken for granted

assumptions and expectations concerning appropriate teacher and pupil behaviour. The medium has ten thousand hours to convey its message.

Aspects of some of the messages underlying teacher-talk are thus convincingly discussed by Bernstein, by Postman and Weingartner, and by Jackson: these researchers fail however to relate the underlying messages to any specific level of communicative behaviour. I have suggested how the coding scheme proposed in the last chapter can begin to investigate some of the messages which are cumulatively conveyed by the detailed organisation of teacher-talk at the level of speech functions and speech acts.

Another way of showing how very general theories and assumptions about "teaching" are displayed in the second-to-second development of talk is as follows. One of my main contentions above has been that a large part of teacher-talk has some kind of metacommunicative function, and that this tells us something about the nature of teaching. Consider a specific (hypothetical) example. A classroom exchange might go:

T: What's the capital of France?

P: Paris.

Outside the classroom, the teacher's interrogative utterance would be a genuine question, i.e. a request for information, and might receive the response "Thanks". But inside the classroom it is likely to be a pseudo-question to which the teacher knows the answer, i.e. a request for talk, to which an appropriate teacher-response is "Right!" or "Good!". The vast majority of teachers' questions have therefore a metacommunicative function (e.g. of Elicit).

At one level this provides a coding problem: do we code teacher-questions as Elicit although they may contain no overt metalinguistic

term? (e.g. as in "Can you tell me the capital of France?") But this coding problem is only an indication of a pervasive feature of teaching-talk - that it is talk designed to elicit talk.

Long after I had written most of the present study, I came across some cross-cultural data which confirms this argument. Philips (1970) and Dumont (1972) discuss the problem of the "silent" American Indian pupil. Both authors start from the frequent complaint of teachers with classes of Indian children that their pupils "don't talk" in class; although they are observed to be highly verbal in other contexts. They both explain this by showing how the Indian groups in question (Cherokee and Sioux) have different sociolinguistic norms for the use of speech and the interpretation of silence. (Cf above, 7.2, on sociolinguistic rules for speech and silence.) In particular, Philips shows that the Indian groups assume that learning is a process which occurs through observation, supervised participation and self-initiated testing. The use of speech is minimal in this process.

These two papers bring out clearly that the equation of education with talking is culture-specific. The classroom system in the U.S.A. (or in Great Britain) is based on various taken-for-granted assumptions; e.g. that talk is the main channel through which learning is conducted, that learning takes place through making public mistakes, and that teaching consists of "getting pupils to talk". But these are not "natural" or necessary features of teaching. These cross-cultural data provide an example of pupils who do not share such assumptions. They therefore lend weight to the analysis above, and to the conclusion that a certain range of speech acts, whose function is to focus on aspects of the speech situation in the classroom, provides a definition of what "teaching" is taken-for-granted to be.

7.5. SPEAKERS' THEORIES OF TEACHING

Underlying the metacommunicative coding scheme is therefore a conception of what teaching is. The coding scheme goes some way towards describing teaching as a theoretical object, since it is designed to isolate characteristic features of how people talk to each other when they are told to "teach". The ethnomethodologists make the point that different theories of an activity, such as teaching or music-making, would lead to different organizations of the resulting activity in practice i.e. different ways of "doing teaching" or making music.² The technical organization of work practices is usually not explored in studies of work situations. That is to say, researchers do not usually take as their explicit topic of study, what people do when they "teach" or "perform music". I have tried to show here that the use of utterances with a metacommunicative function partly constitutes or defines what we understand by "teaching". There are certainly alternative ways of making someone learn something, e.g. by showing him or letting him work it out for himself. But if you ask someone in our culture to "teach", then he will typically consider himself obliged to do the kind of verbal activities catered for in the coding scheme.

² Sudnow had pointed to the different theories of classical music and jazz, and to the associated different styles of performance. (Sudnow, Conference on Deviance, Labelling Theory and Ethnomethodology, Edinburgh, June 1972.) Howard Becker has also pointed out the wide range of variation possible in what are considered appropriate relationships between musical composition (i.e. "art") and "mere performance". For example, sixteenth century composers provided an outline score which left "performers" a great deal of freedom for improvisation, modern pop groups are expected to both compose and perform their own music, and so on. (Becker, seminar on the Sociology of Art, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, April 1974.)

These notions could, of course, be corroborated by finding out what people think does constitute teaching as opposed to other types of speech situations, i.e. what they think are the rules of appropriate speech behaviour in teaching situations. Data on this are presented in chapter 9.

7.6. SPEAKERS' KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER SPEAKERS' THEORIES

People not only have their own expectations about what constitutes appropriate behaviour in different social situations. They also expect other people to have such specific expectations; and they therefore expect other people to notice specific features of social situations.³ And if they believe that others' expectations are oversimplified, they may try to change them. This point can be illustrated by quoting some field notes taken during a period of fieldwork in an Edinburgh secondary school. One of the teachers whom I observed, frequently commented to me spontaneously on his teaching methods and on how he dealt with "incidents" in the classroom. His comments assumed that I had noticed specific incidents which had taken place in the classroom amongst all the things I could have noticed, and that I had attached significance to them.

³ Cf Twer 1972: " . . . people hold expectations that persons engaged in interaction are constantly noticing, figuring out observables, and performing actions that are in accord with what they 'see'."

One of the topics in Sacks 1970 is how people "find" stories to tell in what is going on around them: he talks of "the restricted storyability of the world under a competent viewing of it". (Lecture 3). To be a competent member of a group, one has to know what stories are worth the telling.

Extracts from Fieldnotes

- (1) (Day 1 of observation) (Ref. 1.31)

Teacher talked to me after lesson. Said he was "informal" teacher. Didn't see why kids should be subjected to 40 minutes talk every time, since not many adults could concentrate for that long.

- (2) (Day 2. The teacher had organised a class discussion on language for my benefit.)⁴ (Ref. 1.41)

Teacher told me after lesson: "I do this sort of thing occasionally. Take them out of themselves . . . I'm an improviser. I'll be teaching all my life. I don't want to get in a rut."

- (3) (Notes taken during lesson. The teacher is teaching a small group at the front of the room.) (Ref. 1.58)

P: "Here's the draw."⁵

T: "Shshsh."

A radio comes on.

T: "That's the English cup. Go into the room next door."

Billy goes out the room with radio. Several pupils get up.

T: "Ah!" (raises hand) "That's my representative."

Another radio comes on at back just beside me. T. comes up to back.

T: "Eh do you think you could . . . ? Billy'll get it."

- (4) (Day 3. During lunch.) (Ref. 1.58)

Several teachers talking in staffroom. T looks at me . . .

⁴ This in itself represented a taken-for-granted assumption about ^{what} I wanted to "see" in his classroom!

⁵ I.e. for the Scottish F.A. cup.

mentions to other teachers that pupil had had transistor in his class in morning.

(5) (Day 3. At end of lesson.) (Ref. 1.60)

T came up to back of room to talk to me. Talked about radio incident. Said he hadn't realised group at back were listening to radio - but he didn't blow his top about things like that - although some teachers would.

(6) (Day 7) (Ref. 2.42)

T talked to me about his methods. Preferred pupils to hand stuff in when they had it ready. Reckoned he got more work from some of them that way then by setting specific dates for work.

I interpret these notes, especially the sequence 4-5-6 as follows. The teacher expected me, as a researcher, former pupil, and someone he knew to have some teaching experience, to have specific ideas about what constitutes appropriate behaviour for teachers and pupils in various situations. He expected me to have noticed certain incidents during his classes, to have "understood" their significance and probably to have written about them in my notebook. And he felt that what I had seen in his classroom might have contradicted my expectations. Because he saw his own teaching as unorthodox in some ways, he therefore felt obliged to talk to me explicitly about his "theory" of teaching, to allow me to (re)interpret correctly what I saw in his classroom. He felt particularly obliged to justify his treatment of the radio incident by reference to his theory of "informal" teaching, i.e. he felt he had to point out that he knew some teachers would have regarded it as a punishable offence, whilst he seemed to condone it. In effect, he pointed out to me that he knew what the norm was,

and knew how he differed from it. Likewise on other occasions, the same teacher commented to me that he didn't mind his pupils eating sandwiches in his classes: this was, in fact, something on which I had already taken notes! In other words, the teacher was able to predict correctly the features which were "noticeable" to me about his classroom behaviour. The teacher would have had no reason to comment on his own behaviour in this way, if he had not imputed to me quite specific expectations about "teaching" as a rule-governed activity.

7.7. SUMMARY

This chapter has aimed to show, with a few specific examples, some of the knowledge about teaching which is taken for granted in the coding scheme proposed in the last chapter: knowledge or communicative competence about what constitutes appropriate teacher-pupil behaviour, and knowledge about what "teaching" is. It should be clear therefore that such a coding scheme is an objectification of lay-theories, including the researcher's, about teaching. The chapter has also shown ways in which some very general cultural norms (concerning the appropriate use of speech and silence) and global messages (concerning the "hidden curriculum") may be conveyed by the fine grain of a teacher's classroom talk. In other words, the chapter has shown some ways in which the details of classroom talk embody a theory of teaching as an activity.

CHAPTER 8

SOME INTERPRETIVE RULES OF DISCOURSE

In this chapter I will take up some of the problems which have been glossed over in the last three chapters, concerning how people - teachers, pupils and researchers - interpret language in use. Having illustrated some problems with the concept of metacommunication as I have proposed it and with coding schemes in general, I will propose some interpretive rules of discourse, to begin to specify ways in which metacommunicative utterances are understood.

8.1. SOME COMPLICATIONS IN THE CONCEPT "METACOMMUNICATION"

I want first simply to list some complexities in the use of the concept of metacommunication, and therefore to point out some loose ends in the analysis I have given of teacher-talk. This will hopefully make clearer the status of the descriptions of teacher-talk which I have offered, and also point out some topics for further research.

The first difficulty is that all utterances have some metacommunicative function, and therefore the concept (like Austin's concept of "performatives") is less discriminating than it appears at first. It is easy to illustrate this point. If a speaker says anything in the hearing of another speaker, then part of the message conveyed is that he wants or expects to be listened to, that he wants the communication to continue, that he wants the channels to remain open, or that he expects some kind of a response. These are metacommunicative messages about the communication situation. This is part of Goffman's point that a speaker in a conversation will always and inevitably put

across a "line", whatever he says or does. And part of this "line" is concerned with his rôle as a speaker and hearer in that same conversation. (See especially Goffman 1955, 1957.) This concept appears also to be closely related to Birdwhistell's notion that in the multi-channel human communication system, any message from one system (say, syntactic or lexical) is inevitably and constantly "cross-referenced" by messages from other systems (say, kinesic stress or proxemic). Thus any message is cross-referenced by other messages which indicate how the message is to be taken: literally, metaphorically, seriously, ironically, as a joke, and so on. Unfortunately, Birdwhistell gives very little illustration of specific ways in which cross-referencing is brought about (Birdwhistell 1973:10, 87, 202-6).

This suggests then that we should not think of some utterances as discrete metacommunicative speech acts, but rather of utterances which have a metacommunicative aspect or function. The analogy should be with prosodic rather than with phonemic analysis.

The notion of metacomments is further problematic as follows. I have said, rather loosely, that metacomments point to the structure of the discourse in which they occur, mark its internal boundaries and organisation, synchronise speakers, and so on. I have sometimes implied therefore, that metacomments somehow organise or order discourse.¹ But this is not strictly so, for several connected reasons.

¹ The discussion here borders on the classic problem of sociology: how is social order possible? This question has recently been given a new lease of life by the ethnomethodologists, who have put stress on the question of how language is central to social order. See especially Zimmerman & Wieder 1971 and the work referred to in this paper. Whilst recognising the existence of the vast sociological debate over this question, on which I am not competent to comment, I intend to treat the notion only as it bears directly on my present concerns.

First, conversation is regularly heard as ordered and coherent, without overt metacomments being made. People may (and teachers often do) make metacomments on the topic of conversation, for example. But most conversations proceed happily, with great topical coherence, without topics being referred to. (Cf Garfinkel & Sacks 1971.) Metacomments are not therefore a necessary condition of conversational order.

Second, speakers may make metacomments which fail to order talk to speakers' satisfaction. One can imagine exchanges such as:

A: . . . so that's the first two points.

B: That's only one point.

Metacomments are not therefore a sufficient condition of conversational order.

Third, conversation may be ordered by nonverbal means. This is the point of much of the literature on the direction of eye-gaze (e.g. Kendon 1967, Argyle and Dean 1965) or on kinesics (e.g. Birdwhistell 1970), which shows that, for example, gaze-direction and eyebrow movements function to organise conversation by: controlling synchronisation of speakers, offering the floor, changing speakers, making smooth changeovers, signalling attention, signalling agreement, signalling messages received, signalling channels open, stressing important points, and so on. Again metacomments are not a necessary condition of conversational order (although metamessages of some kind may well be).²

² Much of Sacks' (1967) work on storytelling in conversation is concerned with devices which speakers use to instruct hearers how to listen to the talk. Very few of the devices he discusses are overt metacomments, although all are linguistic as opposed to nonverbal.

Fourth, metacomments clearly have nothing to do with many kinds of order which are nevertheless heard in conversation. One way in which order is conveyed, is by what is not said at all, i.e. by implying many things in a few words. One of the main topics of ethnomethodological research has been the types of knowledge which hearers fill in, when they hear discourse which inevitably glosses over many features of its topic. If everything was said, which could be, the result would be chaos not order. A willingness to let things pass and not to be over stringent about ambiguities, are essential and creative features of conversation. Without metamessages of some kind, talk would grind to a halt. But if everything was reformulated and commented upon, talk would never progress at all.

The most important reason why it is misleading to say that metacomments "organise" discourse is that to talk in such terms risks the implication that such comments are somehow definitive. But metacomments are no more privileged in this respect than any other remarks, since metacomments themselves are open to hearers' interpretations. Therefore metacomments cannot resolve definitively how a conversation is heard as ordered in various ways. The main topic of this chapter will be to formulate some rules for interpreting metacomments.

It is easy to imagine, for example, how metacomments themselves might be reinterpreted over time. Suppose an academic demanded precision of expression from colleagues and students. He might be regarded as "analytic" and "incisive". But if he insists too much on clarity and unambiguity, he might begin to be regarded as "pedantic", "logic chopping" or "too guarded". If, finally, he becomes apparently obsessive about clarity, and Cratylus-like, afraid to commit himself to words for fear of being wrong, he may be classed as "senile", and

his previous demands for clarity be reinterpreted as evidence for his having been of an obsessive tendency all along.

One can reformulate this point as follows. In a nontrivial sense, classroom talk is perceived as orderly because the teacher presents it as such. Teachers organize talk - or more precisely are heard as having organized it - because they assert that that is what they have done. Metacomments represent the teacher's view that the classroom talk is ordered, connected, coherent and interpretable. Metacommunication consists of comments on the talk in which it occurs. It therefore provides an account of that talk, while the talk is going on. Metacommunication is therefore one of the ways in which speakers make rational and accountable their everyday actions: one method,

"with which to recognise and demonstrate the . . . typical, uniform, . . . connected appearance, consistency, . . . planful - in short the rational properties of indexical expressions and indexical actions." (Garfinkel 1967:10).

So far in this chapter, I have pointed to some loose ends and topics for further research, concerned with the way I have developed and used the concept of metacommunication. The argument has been essentially that the concept seems intuitively important, especially as it is closely concerned with the notion of conversational order; but that the concept is less discriminating than it seems at first sight, and that it glosses over aspects of how conversational order is perceived by participants. I now return to specific tape-recorded data to illustrate more closely the problems involved in interpreting metacommunicative utterances.

8.2. A BRIEF EXAMPLE OF CODING PROBLEMS WITH CONVERSATIONAL DATA

"Speech is nothing more than a series of rough hints which the hearer must interpret in order to arrive at the meaning which the speaker intends." L. R. Palmer

The following extract from the tape-recordings has been chosen deliberately to illustrate one particular theoretical difficulty with a coding scheme of the kind that has been proposed: namely that it forces a once-and-for-all interpretation on the data. Once an utterance is coded, it has been given an interpretation, and it is impossible to give formal representation to the fact that, in listening to connected discourse, hearers often revise an interpretation in the light of what they hear later. Hearers are often willing to let pass an ambiguity, for example, on the assumption that it will be cleared up at some later point.³ If speakers were not prepared to "gloss over" things in this way, it is difficult to see how conversation could ever flow at all! Knowing how to gloss over things which other speakers can be expected to take for granted, is not therefore a defect of everyday conversation, but one of the resources upon which competent speakers can draw.⁴

Extract 11

(This extract is from the beginning of a small discussion group.)

T em - -

(1) aa?

the d

(2) aa?

³ For general discussions of this feature of interaction see Garfinkel & Sacks 1970, Cicourel 1973.

⁴ Torode (1972) discusses specifically how pupils may exploit the indexicality of a teacher's language in order to make jokes.

the discussion that we are having is on	
capital - punishment -	(3) t
capital punishment is where - we have a man -	
who kills another man -	(4) n
we call them a murderer -	(5) n
do you understand	(6) othu
P1 yes	(7)
T yes - - -	(8) sa? aa? ac?
a do we - kill - the murderer - or do we put	
him in prison - -	(9) t
do you understand	(10) othu
P2 yes	(11)
P1 yes	(12)
T do you understand	(13) othu
P1 yes	(14)
T yes good - -	(15) ac aa
eh that is what we are discussing	(16) t
now -	(17) aa
do we kill him - or do we put him in	
prison - - -	(18) t
which do you think - Rémi	(19) el
P2 oh I think that's it's better that we put it	
in prison	(20)
T we put him in prison -	(21) ac clg
why	(22) elj
P2 because this man has killed a man - it's not	
eh we have not to kill him because we have not	
eh we can't kill him no it's not eh ()	(23)

T it's not eh - - - good (24) ownu n ac

P2 yes because we cannot kill a man because he
has kill another this is not eh at us to kill
a man it is at eh after this is eh (25)

T you - (26)

ok I know what you mean (27) ownu ac

that em if - - one man - - has killed another
- - you cannot kill him because it is wrong (28) s ownu

The numbers on the right are to facilitate reference. They correspond to the way I have broken up the transcript for analysis here. It could certainly be broken at other points consistent with other interpretations. I will comment on some of the codings in order, discussing specific ambiguities where there appears to be no evidence which could be brought to bear in formulating a definitive coding which everyone would accept as "correct". These ambiguities hinge mainly on the "wait-and-see" quality of everyday discourse.

(1): The initial em might be a hesitation pause, but it might also serve metacommunicative functions of attracting attention, opening channels of communication, and warning pupils that the teacher is about to speak. It may of course be so interpreted by pupils even if the teacher is not conscious of having said it. This does not seem to be directly investigable. (2): Similarly the d might simply be a false start, but again it could serve to attract attention.

These particular ambiguities might be resolved in this case by finding out more about this teacher's speech habits; are these haphazard and idiosyncratic hesitation phenomena, or does he use them to

regular effect in restricted contexts, e.g. only when introducing a new topic of discussion? But to invoke such evidence in this case would simply be to set up ad hoc ground rules to resolve this individual coding problem. It would not be of general help in resolving such categorisation problems.

(8): T repeats what the pupil has said: perhaps to accept P's response as appropriate, possibly to show that he is listening, possibly to attract attention, and possibly to give him the conversational initiative again. Utterances typically serve many functions simultaneously, not all of which can be captured by the built-in multiple coding of the coding scheme.

(9): This is coded as t (topic) since, although superficially a question, its function is to define more closely what the pupils are expected to talk about. (18): This is coded t for the same reason. This coding can be backed up by reference to its immediate context: it occurs in the common sequence $aa \rightarrow t \rightarrow el$. But again it would not work to invoke this justification in general. Also (9) and (18) are almost the same question. So our coding of (18) retrospectively confirms our coding of (9). But there is no way in which this retrospective confirmation can be represented in the coding. There is no way to show formally that we can now be more sure of what function (9) serves, because of the function that we have now discovered that (18) serves.

(6), (10) and (13): Three times the teacher asks "do you understand?". This is coded, semi-automatically, as othu. But this example raises more acutely the prospective-retrospective problem. The problem becomes apparent only when we get as far as (13). T asks "do you understand?" after both pupils have already said "yes"! (And

he then goes on to repeat his question yet again, as it turns out.) So (13) does not seem to serve an unproblematic function of checking on the pupils' understanding, but rather a channel-opening function, or the function of keeping the conversational initiative in the teacher's control, there being a general rule of conversation that the speaker who asks one question, has a reserved right to ask the next. In fact the whole of this extract could be analysed as having little more than a channel-opening function, and of getting everyone on the same wavelength. The discussion really gets underway only at (20) with P2 expressing his opinion. But having questioned the function of (13) we can then go back and ask whether (10) and (6) should not also be coded as aa, rather than more specifically as othu. Again there is no way to indicate formally how a later coding may confirm or contradict an earlier coding, or how a later coding may tell us what a speaker "really meant all along".

The argument is then, that in using the coding scheme, the coder will inevitably use the same interpretive procedures which any competent member and speaker of the language will use to understand the discourse in the first place. These interpretive procedures will involve, among other things, appealing to what has gone before or comes after, in order to justify an interpretation (coding) of what the speaker "really meant". But these prospective-retrospective decisions are precisely what a category scheme cannot deal with. This is an illustration of one way in which a category scheme imposes an artificial fragmentation on the data, and thereby destroys an aspect of precisely what it claims to study. In general terms, it is an illustration of how a coding scheme imposes, objectifies or reifies interpretations, without exploring how the interpretations are made -

although a study of discourse or speech situations should take as part of its topic, how people arrive at interpretations, how they do the coding, or how they make sense of speech.

In order to give precise examples of the problem, I have deliberately restricted my comments to a single piece of recorded data. But it will be clear that such data may be ambiguous for many other reasons. To give just one wider example, Walker and Adelman (1972), in work I have already referred to, discuss how meanings are generated in the classroom over long periods of time, months and even years: to code a piece of data out of context may be to risk missing an essential meaning it implicitly conveys through knowledge which the participants have of the classroom culture.

8.3. "SPEECH FUNCTIONS" VERSUS "SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION SCHEDULES"

I have approached the concept of coding schemes for speech behaviour from two directions: by developing a scheme from concepts of speech functions proposed by Hymes, and also by discussing systematic observation schedules, taking Flanders' system as an example.

I have proposed developments in both schemes as follows. I developed Hymes' concepts of speech functions by breaking down some of his proposed functions in order to ground them in recorded speech data, and by regrouping different functions and making their relations explicit in a model. I proposed developments of a Flanders-type scheme in several ways: by giving the whole scheme conceptual coherence, i.e. by having all the categories explicitly linked under one concept of metacommunication; by dealing explicitly with "structuring talk" which many coding schemes for teacher-talk mention but do not treat systematically; and by showing ways of relating the findings

from such a scheme into much more general sociolinguistic findings.

But these developments of the two approaches show how similar the approaches are from certain points of view. A more general way of framing this argument is as follows. The approaches of Hymes and Flanders appear very different on the surface. Hymes sets out from anthropological assumptions, and proposes his concepts of speech functions within a global and highly programmatic framework for studying the rôle of language in society. He lays great stress on the cultural nature of language as an aspect of a unified system of communicative behaviour. And he argues that linguistic behaviour can be studied only by taking account of the ethnographic contexts in which it is used. Flanders' assumptions, on the other hand, are that speech behaviour can be reduced to small units, coded, tabulated, quantified, and computed. He is working within an essentially psychometric and behaviourist tradition (although these assumptions are not made explicit in these terms in his work). And his style of classroom research has been strongly criticised by educational researchers working within an "anthropological" framework. (See 1.1, 3.2, and 7.2 for references.)

Yet I have shown that when Hymes' framework is made precise enough to be grounded in recorded speech data, it turns out to look very similar to a Flanders-type system; and that even when a Flanders-type system is made more sophisticated by the injection of sociolinguistic concepts, its shortcomings are not thereby remedied. In other words, although Hymes and Flanders start from apparently opposed points of view, their systems are no different in principle, insofar as they both fail to study how speakers interpret talk.

These points are not, of course, merely a criticism of Hymes and Flanders. They are intended to point out an aspect of the status of the coding scheme which I have proposed above. The next section will attempt to deal with this problem of interpretation more centrally.

8.4. INTERPRETIVE RULES OF DISCOURSE

Discourse analysis would ideally explain how we understand sequences of talk. A more humble aim would be to account for our intuition that most of the talk we hear is coherent, orderly, or organised.⁵ Specifically the question is: how do we hear talk as orderly, when there are usually no overt signs of the order? Part of a native speaker's communicative competence in a language, involves knowledge about whether whole stretches of language which he hears or reads, are collections of unconnected utterances, or integrated wholes. Part of this coherence may be explained in terms of grammatical links, such as anaphoric reference, or pronominal substitution (Hasan 1968). But not all the links can be explained by reference to overt, observable, superficial linguistic markers. Chomsky's argument that syntax is explicable only in terms of highly abstract structures and not in terms of surface structures, is equally applicable to the structure of discourse.

In two recent articles, Labov (1970a, 1972a) conveniently summarises some important features of rules for discourse analysis. His initial point is that little progress has been made on discourse by linguists, but that recent work in sociology, especially ethnometho-

⁵ Cf the opening sections of Stubbs 1973 in Appendix E for a slightly fuller statement of this point.

dology, has shown the nature of some of the basic constructs needed in formulating rules of discourse.

Labov argues that the social context must be taken into account to discover even the invariant rules of discourse. Social knowledge (e.g. about the speakers) is required for the interpretation of connected talk. And social constructs, such as shared knowledge, rights and obligations, and speaker rôles, must be used in the rules. He argues that the most important thing to distinguish in an analysis of talk is what is said and what is done, i.e. to distinguish surface grammar from speech acts. (Hasan 1968 deals with surface grammar.) There is often no syntactic connection between utterances in discourse; therefore sequencing rules must relate notions or speech acts, and not the utterances which realise them. Also, speech acts are much more numerous than grammatical sentence types. Austin (1955) suggests there are well over a thousand terms in English for speech acts. (See below in Appendix D to chapter 9 for the numerous terms I elicited from pupils in an experiment.)

Labov proposes initially two kinds of rules in discourse analysis: rules of interpretation, which explain how utterances can be heard as speech acts; and sequencing rules which relate speech acts. In the last chapter, I started to formulate some sequencing rules, showing how teacher-pupil talk is patterned into recursive sequences of functional slots. It will become obvious in this chapter, that such sequencing rules depend on rules of interpretation.

The general form of rules of interpretation proposed by Labov is as follows (my formulation):

utterance U is heard as speech act A in the (social) context X.

For example, a (grammatical) statement may be heard as a request for

action. Thus, to take an example not in Labov, the statement "The door's open" may be heard as "Shut the door" in certain contexts, such as father talking to son. The formulating of a rule to explain such an interpretation would involve notions concerning speaker's rights to request actions from others, and so on.⁶ An indefinite string of other interpretations is also possible:

E.g.

<u>utterance</u>	<u>heard as</u>	<u>speech act</u>
"The door's open"		informative (rare!)
		order, e.g. <u>shut the door</u> or <u>get out!</u>
		invitation, e.g. <u>come in</u>
		warning, e.g. <u>the cat'll get out</u>
		suggestion, e.g. <u>perhaps he went that way</u>
		metaphorical, e.g. <u>why hesitate!</u>
		etc.

One problem for discourse analysis is then to specify the type of knowledge (e.g. of context) which is brought to bear on the "hearing" or interpretation. For the coherence of discourse depends on connections between speech acts, and not necessarily between utterances.⁷

⁶ Essentially the same points are made by Gordon & Lakoff (1971) in different terminology, and with reference to hypothetical data.

⁷ This has been amply illustrated in the work of the ethnomethodologists, especially Sacks (e.g. 1970) on story telling in conversation. Unfortunately Sacks does not make any attempt to distinguish systematically between utterance, sentence, speech act, text, etc. Labov's concerns do not entirely coincide with the ethnomethodologists': briefly, Labov still leaves unexplicated his own reliance on his native competence in English in order to formulate the rules of interpretation which he proposes. Cf my comments on Labov's belief in the possibility of "correct" solutions to sociolinguistic problems (chapter 4).

If one accepts that discourse analysis is doomed to failure by looking for purely linguistic links between utterances, one is led to the position that the connectedness of discourse can be explained only by studying how speakers use certain types of knowledge to interpret what others have said. Ethnomethodology argues that conversation is built on shared knowledge and taken-for-granted understandings which speakers "fill in". The way to explain how conversations are heard as coherent, is therefore to explicate this knowledge. Order in conversations is the outcome of everyday interpretive work, therefore discourse analysis should seek the "rules used to locate meanings in others' actions" (Filmer et al 1972). (I take it that isolating such interpretive rules would be equivalent to formulating "norms" or "surface rules", as opposed to what Cicourel (1971) calls "interpretive procedures" and what Garfinkel (1967) calls "properties of practical reasoning". The use of the surface rules to interpret utterances, depends at a deeper level on assumptions concerning, for example, the ultimate incompleteness and indexicality of all talk, or the reciprocity of perspectives. In other words, one may specify the surface rules, but that does not explicate how speakers use them in given situations, given that they will never be completely unambiguous and explicit. The examples of rules which I give below are therefore "surface rules", and are therefore, in principle, incomplete.)

Very few analyses have been done of the social knowledge which is required to understand the coherence of connected texts. Sacks (1972) provides an analysis of the knowledge about different categories of people which underlies a two-sentence story by a young child. Charniak (1972) sets out some of the everyday knowledge which is similarly relied upon in understanding stories written for children.

Labov (1970a, 1972a) proposes a few interpretive rules of discourse for dealing with fragments of conversation. The rules proposed in the next section, are based on Labov's proposals for the form of such rules.

8.5. SOME RULES FOR INTERPRETING METACOMMENTS IN CONVERSATION

To hearers, the connectedness or coherence of conversation or written text is usually so "obvious" that no explanation seems necessary. It is typically difficult to persuade hearers how much they have to fill in over and above what is expressed in the literal meaning of the words, in order to see the "point" of connected discourse. Very occasionally however, a hearer or reader is presented with a string of items which are brought together and where no connections are immediately apparent, and where the hearer is therefore aware of having to do interpretive work in order to see the connection. For example, I recently saw the following headline in a newspaper (Times Educational Supplement, 19.1.73):

ALCOHOLISM VS. AUTHORITARIANISM.

It is clear for this example, that one can only account for the relation and coherence between the items after one has the knowledge which is contained in the article. One has to have the knowledge to make the link. One function of the headline, of course, is to encourage people to read the article. One needs similar knowledge to understand the connections between utterances in conversation. Hearers have to do interpretive work, and bring knowledge to bear.

Note that in proposing an analysis of this kind, there is no need to assume "order" as something which exists apart from the ways in which order is made visible or recognisable or accountable or

analysable. The question becomes: how do speakers analyse or interpret discourse so that it appears connected? how do they investigate it so as to see its organisation? And conversely, how do speakers orient what they say to the ways in which hearers are going to search for order in what they say? The hearer is dealing with possibilities, by attending to what the speaker might be talking about.

This has long been realised in phonology. Hearers do not hear what is "really" said, but perform an active interpretation, analysing what they hear into functional units, and "hearing" only the important distinctions. But the point has only very recently been applied to understanding conversation. I have several times now taken examples from "mere" phonology, to illustrate the odd fact that linguists have been prepared to allow hearers the ability to make sophisticated interpretive judgements at the level of phonemes, but have tried to do discourse analysis only by reference to surface phenomena. (The extreme example here is Harris 1952.)

In chapters 5 and 6, I showed, mainly by example and by appeal to the reader's intuition, that teachers could appropriately use language which pupils would not be expected to use; and that, more specifically, if pupils did use such language (i.e. language characterised by frequent metacommunicative utterances) then the teacher would feel that something was wrong and might even break off communication. (See extract 5.) I want now to suggest ways of making such expectations a more central topic of study.

What one could call the organisational or systems-management side of situations of talk, has two aspects to it: first, the effort which goes into simply making the interaction continue smoothly; and second, the expression of values which underlies this. I have already

pointed to the radically asymmetrical situation of talk which typically holds in a school classroom. One can go further and say that many forms of language which a teacher uses frequently with his pupils would simply not be tolerated in other situations in which different expectations hold about the conversational rights which various speakers have. For example, a typical teacher-question is "What do you mean?" Pupils are frequently required to define more closely what they are talking about. That is, teachers frequently use language with an elicit justification or elicit clarification function, as defined above. But Garfinkel (1967) describes experiments in which people were asked to clarify the meaning of common-sense remarks made in the course of different everyday conversations and small talk about the weather, the speaker's health, activities they were engaged in, and so forth. When students asked unsuspecting friends and spouses to clarify "what they meant" by remarks which would ordinarily pass unnoticed, initial bewilderment sometimes passed into violent reactions of the "what do you mean 'what do I mean?'" type. Having described several incidents of this kind, Garfinkel does not make explicit however that only specific social situations where specific expectations and rôle relations hold between speakers will permit explicit monitoring of the other's speech in this way.

The quite specific expectations which speakers hold about what constitutes appropriate monitoring behaviour for other participants can be formulated in an interpretive rule as follows:

RULE 1⁸:

If A makes repeated and unmitigated statements about B's speech, or asks repeated and unmitigated questions about B's understanding of A, B will accept these statements or questions as legitimate or appropriate, only if B believes that A has the right to make such statements or ask such questions, and this right is inherent in only a limited number of social situations, of which the paradigm example is the teaching situation, where A is the teacher.

The various qualifications in the rule as I have formulated it, cover various cases. A pupil may sometimes be permitted to ask mitigated metaquestions of a teacher such as "I don't quite see what you mean". (Hypothetical example.) Similarly, I specify "repeated" since a pupil may get away with an occasional example, but only a teacher can do it frequently. This is a case of a difficulty inherent in describing speech behaviour, namely that there are often no absolutes which can be isolated in interaction analysis. A feature of speech may express no particular social information about a speaker if present in low proportion, but will give significant information in high percentages. For example, little information about the social relationships of speaker and hearer is available from the fact that metacommunication occurs. I have given examples above of everyday metacommunicative statements, and have emphasised that states of talk are always propped up and coaxed along by metacommunication to some extent. But a very high percentage of

⁸ I will number the rules merely to facilitate reference later. No ordering is implied in the numbering.

utterances with a metacommunicative function, all used by one speaker, would probably indicate a teaching situation.⁹

In other words, in any given situation, a hearer would invoke other ground rules to decide, for example, when the metacomments had become "repeated". He would, in Garfinkel's terms, start "ad hocing". An attempt to make such rules explicit, runs into the same infinite regress as an attempt to make the coding categories explicit. Therefore the rules proposed here indicate the type of knowledge which a hearer brings to bear on understanding discourse, and not all the knowledge which he might bring to bear on a particular verbal exchange. This point is important, for it means that I am not claiming here to give definitive interpretations of, say, teacher-pupil exchanges, but rather to specify what kind of interpretations are possible and how they are possible. Sacks (1970, lecture 5) makes the same point as follows:

"Among the plainest kinds of problems there are in dealing with people talking together, engaging in conversation, is coming to be able to say what somebody heard. . . . I don't ever intend to prove that so-and-so heard such-and-such . . . What I intend to prove is that it's possible that that's so. I won't always say that, but for me possibility is an extremely strong kind of relationship, and it's the strongest relationship I will ever be intendedly proposing. I want to prove possibilities. . . ."

Note that Rule 1, concerning what is considered as appropriate verbal monitoring behaviour, could be considered as a specific example of Goffman's concept of "civil inattention" (Goffman 1963). Just as it is inappropriate to stare at people in buses, so it is

⁹ Cf Sankoff (1972) who proposes rules of sociolinguistic behaviour which include estimates of probability of a bit of behaviour occurring. Statistically variable performance is interpreted as reflecting an underlying different probability of deletion, etc., for various environments.

generally inappropriate to draw attention explicitly to their speech behaviour. This is another example of a way in which it is possible to ground some of Goffman's concepts more closely and systematically in recorded data than he does himself.

I want now to return to extract 4, of which I previously gave a very brief and over-definitive account, and to propose some ways of specifying how hearers can reach such an interpretation. I reproduce the extract here again for convenience:

(The teacher is getting the class to identify a passage of English and say where it could have come from. He has given his opinion that the passage was spoken by the plaintiff in a courtroom.)

T . . . mm - Colin - you don't think it is - well where is it then

P I think it's an inspector speaking to the person who's in the - accident - she's quite upset - - -

T do you (5)

well who is speaking then who says this action arises out of a motor accident - a person . a woman who is very upset . after just being involved in an accident - - - would not speak like this she would be pausing far more often - - this is definitely someone who is in authority or someone who is giving evidence - in my opinion (4)

have you any more points you can back your - theory up with - - - 'cause if not . you know - the class isn't going to know to believe - - really - - if you make a statement Colin you must have three or four good points . with which you can back it up - - . . .

The problem is to specify how the pupils and I could have recognised that the teacher has done whatever it could be said that he has done. How did he successfully bring off his counterattack on the pupil's contribution to the talk? (This was the interpretation which I gave to the exchange above, in chapter 5.) It could be said that the teacher has done the following metacommunicative acts, among others:

he has rejected a suggestion, called into question an opinion, made a criticism, made a complaint that the pupil's contribution is inadequate, vetoed or overruled a suggestion, persuaded pupils that his original opinion is correct, etc.

I take it then that, in one way or another, the pupil will feel that he has been "squashed". But how did I or the pupil realise that a suggestion had been squashed? How did we both "analyse utterances into activities" (to use Sacks' phrase) when there are no infallible linguistic markers of the speech act of squashing suggestions? The teacher could after all have successfully vetoed the pupil's suggestion by saying "Rubbish!" and leaving it at that. Yet there is nothing in what the teacher says which explicitly rejects the pupil's opinion. One has to read the exchange very closely to believe this.

In reading the exchange, one has automatically applied knowledge about how statements are routinely squashed to its interpretation.

To reject a suggestion by saying "Rubbish!" would be one routine way of doing it. But the teacher chooses a method which orients the pupils to general features of the classroom situation: another activity the teacher is doing is using the pupil's contribution as an excuse, to attract the pupils' attention to a rule of talk in the classroom. He takes this occasion as an opportunity to deal with what

he takes to be a category of similar occasions that could arise. What we see the teacher doing is, then, justifying, criticising, etc. by invoking a rule which he formulates. Appealing to a rule is a common-sense way of accounting for orderly activities in everyday life.¹⁰ The teacher analyses an event as not complying with a rule and thus assigns a specific sense to it.

But, further, I had already recognised the teacher's intention to call into question the pupil's suggestion with "do you?" and a long pause. There is nothing explicitly critical or evaluative in the teacher's words here. So why do we intuitively hear it as evaluative? The pupil presumably does not hear the "do you?" as a question - to which an appropriate answer would be e.g. "yes, I do". We could only hear teacher-talk in this way if we have some interpretive rule of discourse of the form:

RULE 2:

Any utterance which a teacher makes directly after a pupil's remark, answer, etc., is heard as a metacomment on that remark, etc., and, further, is heard as evaluative.

The only common exception to this rule seems to be if the teacher asks a genuine question of the pupil, because, for example, he has not heard what the pupil has said.

Sinclair et al (1972:82) quote a rare example of a misunderstanding in which a pupil takes the teacher's comment to be evaluative (i.e. in accord with rule 2) when the teacher does not intend it to be.¹¹

¹⁰ This is a central topic of ethnomethodology. See especially Zimmerman 1971. And see chapter 9 below where I discuss this at some length.

¹¹ This exchange is further analysed, from a slightly different point of view, by Ashby (1972).

The teacher is exploring reactions to regional accents. A pupil laughs at a voice on a tape-recording, and the teacher asks why, intending, as it turns out, to use the laughter to begin discussion of why this accent "sounds funny".

T: What kind of person do you think it is? Do you -

P: ((laughs))

T: What are you laughing at?

P: Nothing.

Sinclair et al point out that the pupil takes the teacher's comment to be an order to stop laughing. This kind of misunderstanding can be explained by the kind of interpretive rule I have proposed. The pupil applies the rule, and hears the teacher's comment as a negative evaluation and therefore as an order. In the light of this example, one can reformulate Rule 2 as follows:

RULE 2'

Any utterance which a teacher makes directly after a pupil's response to some relevant aspect of the teaching situation, will be heard as:

- 1) a metacomment on the pupil's response
- 2) an evaluation of the pupil's response, and
- 3) an order, if the teacher's utterance refers to an action that the pupil could carry out.

i.e. hearers will search for interpretations of the teacher's utterance in that order.

This exchange is yet another example of what I have already suggested several times above: that it is often the critical moments of mis-understanding which are the most fruitful in showing up the routines of speech behaviour.

A related and very general rule is:

RULE 3

Explicit metacomments on anyone's speech are heard as evaluative in any social context (unless they are heard as doing the legitimate practical work of checking on understanding or on whether one's audience can hear clearly, etc.)

(Note that if such checks on understanding, etc., become too frequent, then this is again construed as inappropriate, as suggested in Rule 1.)

If hearers have no interpretive rules like Rule 3, then it is difficult to account for the coherence of conversational exchanges like the following. (From my field-notes.)

A student has joined two workmen in a pub. They have bought him a drink although they do not already know him. (It is Christmas eve!) The two workmen have been talking for some minutes, the student listening. Then the conversation went:

W: You're not saying much.

S: (Pause) I'm just enjoying my Guinness.

The problem for discourse analysis is to specify how these two utterances are heard as coherent: how S's remark is heard as an appropriate and relevant response to W's remark. Or simply: why does S say what he does? The linguistic links between the two utterances are minimal and precarious. There is a you-I sequence; and the just might refer back to something. But this is hardly enough to form a bridge.

One way to interpret the sequence is as follows. W's remark is a metacomment on S's lack of contributions to the conversation, and is therefore heard as evaluative; as drawing attention to a situation which should be righted; as criticising S for not contributing to the conversation; and further, as more or less demanding that S does

contribute. This interpretation is justified by rule 3. (Possibly W felt that he had the right to demand conversation from S since he had bought him a drink.)

S clearly does not take W's remark as an informative, although its grammatical form is a statement. An appropriate response to an informative would have been "No", or "That's true". To reply in this vein would, in turn, probably be heard as insolent. Rather we hear S's response as an excuse or an account for his silence. This interpretation might in turn be backed up by an interpretive rule of the form: if one utterance is heard as a criticism, then search for a following utterance which could be heard as an excuse. There are other cues in S's response which make the interpretation of an excuse a likely one. S's response is not only appropriate, insofar as it provides a reasonable cause for not talking i.e. S is not simply saying "I can't talk with a mouthful of Guinness". S's remark skillfully turns a criticism into an occasion for reiterating thanks, by referring with appreciation to the drink which W has bought.

So, as in the more general, and unexplicated, analysis of teacher-talk above, the metacomment gives us some leverage with which to begin to analyse how this fragment is heard as ordered and coherent: W's remark draws attention to a feature of the speech situation which he thinks worthy of comment. This remark is heard as critical, and sets the hearer up to expect an excuse.

Again, I make no claim that my analysis of this fragment is "correct" or definitive. Other interpretations are possible. For example, S's answer might be construed as "Haven't I got the right to a bit of peace and quiet to enjoy my drink!" This interpretation would leave standing the notion that W's remark is heard as critical.

Alternatively, W's remark might be heard not as evaluative, but rather as inviting S to enter the conversation. I do not deny such possible alternatives, the aim being to formulate the kind of knowledge which would justify one possible interpretation, and show how that kind of interpretation is possible.

Another fragment of data (from my fieldnotes) comparable to the pub exchange, on which I will comment very briefly, is as follows:

In an informal discussion over lunch, some postgraduate students were discussing teaching methods:

S1: The general conclusion we seem to have reached is -

S2: A summary!

S1: Well, what I think you should teach kids is . . .

I interpret this fragment via Rule 3, as follows. S1 takes it upon himself to summarise the discussion to date, i.e. to make a metacomment on the state of the whole discussion. S2 challenges his right to do this - by making an explicit metacomment on what S1 has done, S1 then backs down from his proposed global summary, and offers only to summarise what he himself thinks. It seems that S1's metacomment was heard as inappropriately evaluating the state of discussion. S2 then uses another metacomment which is heard as a challenge.¹²

The rules I have proposed so far have been concerned with interpreting metacomments and have specified some ways in which, if a speaker makes metacomments on another's speech, then he risks being taken for a pedant, a critic, or somehow devious, and some ways in

¹² See Stubbs 1973:26ff in Appendix E for a more detailed discussion of how a metaquestion may be heard as a challenge.

which speakers may use metacomments as evaluative, as challenges, and so on. Similarly, it is typically inappropriate to make metacomments on, and to draw attention to one's own speech. But there are occasions when it is appropriate and even obligatory. Consider the following exchange (from my fieldnotes):

In a greengrocer's shop.

Self: Two golden delicious, please.

((Woman gives me two apples.))

Woman: Six pounds, please.

Self: You mean six pence.

Woman: That's with her ((pointing to another woman in shop))
talking about money. ((To other woman)) Did you hear
what I said. He says "Two apples", I said "Six pounds"
instead of "six pence" . . .

((She is still repeating this as I leave the shop.))

The question to be answered by discourse analysis is: why did the woman say that, after I had corrected her? There was after all no misunderstanding left to clear up, and there had been no real misunderstanding at any point. One can explain the woman's response by assuming a rule of the form:

RULE 4

If a speaker makes a slip, mistake, etc., in his speech, then he is

- (a) expected to correct it, and
- (b) expected to make a metacomment on it, by way of excuse, if the slip is particularly "silly", "absurd", etc.

This rule can be read as a specific example of Goffman's general observation (1955:26) that

"there is no occasion of talk so trivial as not to require each participant to show serious concern with the way in which he handles himself . . . ".

The excuses of the woman in the greengrocer exchange show that she was aware that she had let slip her attention from the interaction with me, was still thinking of a previous interaction, was not showing serious concern with her present interaction, etc. But as often in Goffman's work, he fails to tie his intuitively appealing observation in with specific (e.g. speech) data. Goffman is over-pessimistic in saying that the cues by which a person expresses his view of the situation, and his evaluation of the participants, especially of himself, are "diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter" (1955).¹³ It is possible to locate the cues, and to link them via rules of interpretation to at least partial accounts of how discourse is heard as coherent.

These various rules of interpretation have therefore started to show the kind of explanation which is possible for questions posed by discourse analysis, such as: why did somebody say X? or why is X an appropriate answer, retort, follow-on, snub, etc., to Y? (These being aspects of the greatest sociolinguistic riddle of them all: why does anybody say anything?) It will doubtless be shown that some of these proposed rules are wrong or need modifying. But I take it that I have shown that a whole gamut of rules and expectations is associated with metacomments on on-going talk.

¹³ Cf. Pride 1971:112: "The language user himself is probably engaged in the more or less continuous exercise, . . . of handling status relationships and values of one sort or another, the linguistic markers of which may be quite minimal. . . . (Such markers) matter a great deal, for all their fleeting appearance in the stream of speech." (My emphases.) Pride is quite right, but that does not help with the task of analysis. There are no data in Pride's paper.

These rules seem to represent the kinds of procedures that hearers might use to "analyse utterances into activities" (Sacks): to hear whole stretches of talk as doing teaching, or to hear specific utterances as evaluations, orders, excuses, etc. Note (to repeat) the status of these rules: they remain at the level of "surface rules", since they leave unexplored how it is that speakers can identify particular utterances as examples of types of speech acts. In other words, such rules are quite clearly idealisations, and speakers will decide whether or not they apply to concrete situations by further decisions made on an ad hoc basis. This "defect" of the rules cannot be remedied simply by formulating further rules for applying the first set of rules: this would result only in an infinite regress. The relationship of such idealised rules to actual speech behaviour and actual interpretations of speech in context, can be studied only by looking at the features of concrete situations attended to in applying the rules. (Cf Zimmerman 1971.) The aim here has been to specify types of knowledge which are brought to bear on understanding connected discourse, and to specify how certain interpretations are possible.

8.6. SUMMARY

I argued in 6.3 that explicit metacommunication is an integral structural feature of a restricted number of speech events. I have now shown that the concept of metacommunication is a useful construct in formulating various interpretive rules of discourse. Without such a concept it is difficult to account for the coherence that we hear in the conversational exchanges quoted above. The fact, then, that the concept can be used both to link different speech events at a specific

structural level, and also to formulate a set of interrelated rules of discourse lends credence to the concept. It has explanatory power beyond its original, almost tautological, definition.

This chapter has clearly only begun to work out a few related interpretive rules. But I have taken the argument far enough for my present purpose, which is to show ways of explicating the values which underlie specific types of characteristic types of teacher-talk.

Chapter 9 will now bring a different type of evidence to bear on explicating the status of my description of teacher-talk, by studying how pupils and teachers themselves describe classroom language.

CHAPTER 9

TALKING ABOUT TALKING:

PUPILS' ACCOUNTS OF TEACHING AS A SPEECH EVENT

"Popular linguistic criticism - an activity at which the English excel." (Halliday in Grammar, Society and the Noun, 1966.)

The main part of this thesis has been concerned with describing teaching as a speech event. One of the problems, which I outlined early on (in 1.6), but have not returned to, was to describe teaching in such a way as to make statements which are sociolinguistically interesting, but which also convey a "recognisable reality" to teachers themselves. So a subsidiary question becomes: how do people themselves describe speech situations? This in turn becomes an interesting theoretical question in its own right, since very little is known about the nature of the reports and accounts which people give of social (including speech) behaviour. This chapter discusses the form of accounts which people give of speech situations.

Another way of formulating this point is as follows. This study has so far been concerned exclusively with the researcher's analysis of teacher-talk. Part of this analysis has been concerned with teacher-talk as an account of the on-going situation in which it is produced. In the course of the argument, I have made various only partially justified statements about what "teaching" is to its participants. For the duration of this chapter, I shift focus and look directly at what people say explicitly that teaching is.

Just as I have been concerned primarily with the form and structure of my (the researcher's) account of spoken interaction, I will here be concerned primarily with the form and structure of speakers' accounts of spoken interaction. This should throw further light on my previous discussion of the status of the descriptions which I (as researcher) have proposed of teacher-talk. There will then be data for comparing directly the researcher's account with "lay" accounts. In other words they will provide one way of "triangulating" on the descriptions already proposed (cf 4.7).

9.1. "HAPHAZARD AND WHIMSICAL"?

"In the anthropomorphic model, the person is not only an agent, but a watcher, commentator and critic as well." (Harré and Secord 1972.)

Sociologists, anthropologists and sociolinguists study how people behave in different social situations. But they have traditionally paid scant attention to what their subjects have themselves to say about their own behaviour. (Anthropologists have tended to lump together what they have observed and what they have been told.) This is a strange gap in research, for a central feature of man's social behaviour is its self-consciousness. In interacting with others, speakers constantly monitor their own speech and the speech of others, interpret, "read between the lines", wonder whether others have "said what they meant" or whether they "meant what they said". In addition, they constantly provide accounts of behaviour in retrospect: in newspaper accounts and diaries, but also in everyday conversation: "Guess what happened to me today!", "So, I said to her, I said . . . ", "I

heard you talking to John this morning".¹

Linguists tend to regard the ordinary man's interest in language and his knowledge of theories of communication as "superficial and spasmodic", "haphazard and whimsical" (Abercrombie 1937), as "elicited cant" (Hoenigswald 1966), or as "a mixture of tradition, prejudice, myth and irrelevance" (Mittins et al 1970:14). But actual studies of popular notions about language-use are few and far between. In this chapter, I examine some of the ways in which such notions are haphazard, but I suggest also how they reflect a whole way of thinking about social behaviour. The linguist disregards at his peril speakers' attitudes and notions regarding speech. For just as "groups" exist because people think they belong to them², likewise a "language" is a language because its speakers feel it to be so.³ These are aspects of Thomas' aphorism: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." Simply to dismiss members' rationality as "haphazard" or "irrelevant" is to make them out to be "cultural dopes" (Garfinkel 1967) by an unfavourable comparison with a supposedly more "scientific" mode of rationality. Whereas the task for research is to explore ways in which this "haphazard", sloppy, incomplete rationality can nevertheless produce social scenes which are perceived as ordered, coherent, organised and connected.

¹ Sacks has emphasised that certain features of conversations are specifically preservable and reportable. For example, conversationalists have to do a precise kind of structural analysis on conversations to know what a conversation was primarily "about", and to therefore be able to say of a conversation "he called to tell me that X", although many other topics may also have been discussed within that same conversation. See Schegloff & Sacks 1973.

² This is argued in detail by Sprott (1958).

³ This is argued by Pride (1970).

This chapter proposes, then, a critical study of speakers' accounts of speech events in order to investigate some aspects of: what people regard as "explanations" of social behaviour; what features of speech they pay attention to in formulating these explanations; and how they justify their interpretations and explanations.

Accounts were collected in a quasi-experimental situation which I describe in 9.3 below. Given my defense of naturalistic research throughout this study, I should emphasise here that my criticisms are not of experiments qua experiments. My objections are to experiments which fail to explore experimental "subjects'" interpretations of the tasks they are made to perform. Informants' interpretations are here the central topic of study.

9.2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON ACCOUNTS OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The data - transcripts of tape-recorded accounts of speech situations - are very rich. I will mention some of the many ways in which they might be analysed, by referring to various pieces of research. To some extent, this section takes the place of a review of the literature. But the neglect of this kind of research requires that I bring out a developing theme in different areas of research rather than "review" one "field" of work.

9.2.1. Taking children's accounts seriously

Reid⁴ (1958, 1966) used loosely structured interviews with five-year-old children, to find the language available to them for talking and

⁴ I am grateful to Miss Jess Reid for her helpful comments on the best way to conduct the present experiment.

thinking about reading, and studied their own accounts of reading experiences and difficulties. Reid is concerned with improving the teaching of reading, but interesting general findings emerge concerning specific expectations which children hold about reading, and more general notions that "words" must have "meanings", about the systematic nature of the alphabetic system, about the function of reading and its relation to writing, and so on.

Campbell and Lawton (1970) similarly suggest that children's accounts (of social behaviour, in this case) are often more penetrating than many adults would give them credit for. They point to the general lack of studies of children's thinking in this area, traditional Piagetian studies being mainly in nonsocial areas. Much more will be said below about the categories with which speakers think and talk about social behaviour.

The main link between these pieces of work and the present chapter, is simply their almost unique insistence^e that the accounts of even very young children are worth study in their own right.

Halliday (1969) goes even further than these studies, in suggesting that children have internalised models of language-use which are more sophisticated than adults' consciously held models. He claims that adults often see language only as a vehicle for conveying messages; but that children typically recognise the functional diversity of language in use (and therefore have an internalised model of language-use close to that held by the sociolinguist-researcher!). Halliday proposes, in effect, studying children's "home-made" models of language-use, which leads directly on to points made below. Halliday does not however back up his argument with reference to any data.

9.2.2. Speakers' linguistic terms and researchers' models

Various researchers have proposed classifying speakers' terms for speech acts and speech events. Austin (1962:149) claims that there are over a thousand expressions in English which refer to speech acts. Hoenigswald (1966) proposes a semantic field study of such vocabulary referring to speech. Hymes (1962:110) proposes discovering the speech events which matter in a given culture by studying the words and expressions which speakers use to name them. Fishman (1971) makes the implications of this kind of study more explicit when he proposes that the best way for the researcher to arrive at an "emic" set of speech acts, is to play recorded samples of talk to natives and to get them to comment on the uses of different varieties of language in the recordings. Although Fishman proposes an experimental technique similar to that described in this chapter (in 9.3), I can find no indication that he has in fact carried out such an experiment.

Studying speakers' terms in this way, as an aid to setting up an emically valid model of speech behaviour, suggests the value of studying the form of members' whole accounts of social behaviour.

9.2.3. Accounts of social events

An early, and now classic paper, on "accounts" of social action is C. Wright Mills' (1940) "Situational Action and Vocabularies of Motive". Mills argues that "motives are words". That is to say, motives are typical vocabularies with ascertainable functions in delimited social situations, which are accepted by people as normal or natural reasons or excuses for behaviour. Children, in the process of socialisation, are given their motives in standardized, i.e. linguistically formulated, forms. In the context of the present argument, then, Mills' main point is that "motives" are taken-for-granted absolutes in

people's accounts of social behaviour; as far as people are concerned, such motives are explanatory, and not further analysable:

"As a word, a motive tends to be one which is . . . an unquestioned answer to questions concerning social and lingual conduct."

Two recent works which propose the study of the underlying form and logic of whole accounts of social events are Scott and Lyman (1968) and Harré and Secord (1972).

Scott and Lyman do not present any systematic analysis of collected accounts, but make several important points. Their point which is of most interest in the context of my argument here is that accounts are a crucial element in the social order. This is firstly because accounts, such as excuses and justifications, are routinely expected when something out of the ordinary happens. In other words, accounts typically have a reparatory function. But second, accounts contribute to the social order in the way in which they are constructed from socially approved vocabularies: not any form of account will do in any situation. To take an obvious example, which I have already used, one does not give the same account to one's wife and to one's bank manager, of why one wants to borrow money, (and both the wife and the bank manager realise this). Accounts are standardized within cultures and within social situations. My aim in this chapter is to show some of the ways in which accounts of speech behaviour are standardized, in some respects to the point of stereotyping.

I have already discussed (in 2.1) several concepts in Harré and Secord 1972. A central concept in this work, which I touched on only briefly above, is that man's ability to give accounts of his actions is essentially linked to his powers as a self-monitoring agent. Their position is perhaps most succinctly summed up by Harré 1971:

"The achievement of extracting a science (of social psychology) from anecdote, is largely a matter of having an adequate conceptual system for the analysis of accounts and commentaries."

I do not place the analysis of accounts as centrally as this. I would base the study of social interaction on direct observation, rather than on people's accounts of it. (This is one criticism I made of Harré and Secord in chapter 2.) But they are certainly correct to point out the almost total lack of basic information on how people construct accounts, commentaries, reports and explanations of their own everyday social behaviour.

Harré and Secord argue that research should be concerned to analyse the underlying logic of accounts. The aim should be to collect accounts, by manoeuvring the informant into continually justifying the basis of his statements, until he reaches propositions which are tautologies in his cognitive structure: and hence to reveal the different internal structures of accounts. This is essentially the experimental method which I describe below.⁵

Again however, Harré and Secord provide no examples of what an analysed account looks like or what sort of tautological propositions they expect informants to arrive at. In this connection, they take these tautological propositions or proposition-like rules for granted as tautologies, and fail to discuss the fact that such rule-like statements are commonsense explanations of behaviour.⁶

⁵ It has also been pointed out to me that this technique is similar to "Hinkle's ladder" which is used to elicit informants' concepts in work based on repertory grids. E.g. see Nash 1973.

⁶ They also hesitate over whether accounts are analyses and not data, i.e. whether it is possible to have any other kind of explanation of social behaviour apart from people's own accounts of it (see p.7). They finally state that accounts are themselves to be analysed by the researcher (e.g. p.312).

9.2.4. Accounting procedures

Only a few (socio)linguists have paid attention to whole cultural interpretations of speech behaviour. Albert (1964) discusses the rich and explicit lore about language and speech in Burundi, where children are formally trained in appropriate speech behaviour. Arewa and Dundes (1964) show how native interpretations of proverbs must be taken into account in an explanation of how proverbs may be appropriately used. Basso (1970) explicitly integrates native interpretations of speech behaviour into his own account of communicative competence in Apache culture. And Labov (1972a) shows how participants' evaluations of speech behaviour are an integral part of the speech event of "sounding" (ritual insults) in American negro culture.

Such studies show clearly the need to take seriously speakers' own interpretations of their behaviour in any explanation of social behaviour. They take Garfinkel's (1967) point that man in society is not a "judgemental dope", but is rather making constant decisions, judgements, interpretations, and inferences, and searching for pattern in the passing social scene.

But the studies mentioned above still stop short of studying the underlying logic of members' accounts. They therefore take those accounts for granted and tend to accept them at face value as "explanations". They study only the pattern which people find in social behaviour, and not the ways in which people search for that pattern, and actively construct it. They study the order which people report, without studying the ways in which people go about finding, seeing, describing and explaining that order. This is the topic which ethnomethodology has set for itself (e.g. see Zimmerman & Wieder 1970:289). I will not discuss here further the ethnomethodo-

logists' approach to the study of "accounting procedures". I mention the work partly for the sake of completeness. The analysis presented below is a contribution to the study of how members of society actively search for meaning in the social world. But it is not an analysis of the most fundamental "properties of practical reasoning" (Garfinkel 1967) or of "interpretive procedures" (Cicourel 1971). (These terms are used synonymously by Garfinkel and Cicourel to refer to the most basic assumptions, e.g. of reciprocity of perspectives, which men must make in order to be able to communicate with one another.)

9.2.5. Summary

So far, I have briefly indicated various kinds of study which are relevant to the analysis of the experimental data. I began by pointing to studies which simply insisted on taking seriously what people (even very young children) have to say about their own social behaviour and experiences. I then mentioned proposed studies of speakers' terms in setting up categories and models of speech acts and speech events. Studies of isolated terms and expressions were then seen as only preliminary to the study of members' whole accounts of social behaviour.

One general idea behind all the studies mentioned is therefore to explore the concepts for describing social behaviour which are embedded in ordinary language-use. The experimental procedure, now described, was intended to elicit from informants, accounts which were as spontaneous and nondirected as possible.

9.3. THE EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

Two short extracts from tape-recordings made in different speech situations were played to children of different ages and to adults.

The informants were told nothing about where or when the tape-recordings were made. (One was a teacher holding a discussion with two French pupils; the other was two teenage London boys being interviewed on the radio. See appendix B to this chapter for transcripts of the extracts.) The informants were told that their task was to listen to the recordings and then to say as precisely as they could what they thought was "going on", being as explicit as they could about why they interpreted the recordings as they did. The informants were allowed to hear the extracts as often as they wished, and then questioned in a loosely structured way. Initial questions were as open-ended as possible: "well, what do you think of that?" or "what do you think's going on there?" As the informants ran out of things to say, more specific questions were asked: who do you think is speaking? what are they doing? what is the point? where do you think the speakers come from? how old might they be? how are they talking to each other? how would you talk about it if . . . ? But no linguistic terms, such as "speaking" or "talking", were used in the questions until they had been used spontaneously by the informants. The open-ended and relatively nondirected nature of the accounts is central.

The term "informants" is chosen deliberately, as opposed to "subjects" for example. It implies that the children and adults informed me about speech behaviour, and that their accounts were taken seriously.

The experiment was conducted with forty children, twenty boys and girls from both IInd and Vth form of an Edinburgh secondary school; and with seven students. The students were interviewed individually, and the children in pairs, on the assumption that children would talk

more spontaneously and at greater length if they were with one of their friends. The children sorted themselves into pairs for the interviews, for which they volunteered in the first place. Some children in the classes I worked with elected not to take part in the experiment, and they were not forced to. With some of the younger children, the experiment was conducted more as a game along the lines of: "I'm going to play you some tape-recordings, but I'm not going to tell you where I got them - I want you to try and guess what's going on . . .".

All the informants' accounts were themselves tape-recorded and transcriptions of these accounts provide the data. The experiment was simple to organize and carry out, although time-consuming. The data comprise some fifteen hours' tape-recorded interviews and a corresponding 270 pages of transcripts.

In many experiments on social behaviour, the informants are severely restricted in the form of judgements they may make. They may, for example, be given a very limited range of information on which to make "judgements", or they may be given a ready-made terminology and language to use, e.g. by being required to "rate" some phenomenon on a "scale" of concepts.⁷ The experiment may therefore become self-validating, as the research instrument imposes its own order on the data.

The aim in the present experiment was to give the informants information which was complex enough to allow several different interpretations and hypotheses to be made about it, and to allow the

⁷ See Harré and Secord (1972) where this is discussed in more detail. The present experiment was carried out before the publication of Harré and Secord's book, which nevertheless helped me greatly in thinking about the material afterwards.

informants to interpret the information in their own terms, and therefore to study the logic of people's judgements and the decisions they made in framing them.

9.4. THE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The tape recorded interviews (about fifteen hours) were all transcribed. All the terms which informants used to talk about speech behaviour were listed. These were mainly terms for speech acts, speech events, and speakers. This gave a reference list of terms available to informants for formulating generalisations about language-use (see appendix D to this chapter). All the rules and generalisations offered about appropriate speech behaviour were similarly listed, and then used to build up coherent sets of native rules for different speech events. All direct references to the speech on the tapes were listed together with the informants' interpretations based on these, to show which features of speech, speakers were conscious of attending to. Finally, all the informants' interpretations of the whole speech events were summarised in terms of: who the informants thought was speaking, i.e. their job, role, etc.; how old they thought the speakers were; what country or town they thought they came from; what the speakers' attitudes were; where the speakers might have been; and what kind of speech event it was.

The whole analysis is too long to be presented here. I will concentrate on the kind of features attended to in making interpretations; and the "rules" of teacher-pupil and peer group interaction to which informants appealed in justifying their interpretations. This analysis will then be adequate to throw comparative light on my own (researcher's) accounts of teacher-talk in previous chapters.

9.5. EXAMPLES OF THE DATA WITH COMMENTARIES

As an introduction to a more systematic discussion of the logic of informants' accounts, I propose simply to quote three extracts from the tape-recorded interviews, and to comment on them. It is particularly important in research of this kind, where there are no widely-accepted methods of data collection and analysis, to give the reader a clear idea of "what the data look like" before proceeding to an analysis which is inevitably a long way from the recorded data.

In the extracts, my questions are in brackets. The numbers on the right are merely to facilitate reference.

Extract 1

G and M are Hind form boys. This extract is from the beginning of the interview. (Ref. Y1.1.)

- (Well - what d'you think's going on?) (1)
- M I think it's eh - (2)
- G They're discussing whether - what corporal punishment - (3)
- M It's a - German. (4)
- G Do you want what nationality and everything they are? (5)
- (Yeah. Tell me anything you want.) (6)
- M Sounds like a German. (7)
- G Maybe a - I think one of them's a Pakistani you know the way you hear them like the bus conductors trying to scratch out "fares please". (8)
- (Which one d'you reckon's the Pakistani?) (9)
- G The - one of the pupils. (10)
- M I think one of them's German. (11)
- (Which one - can you tell me whether it's A, B or C?) (12)

G Eh - (13)

(C'you remember?) (14)

G Eh - I think it's B. (15)

M I think it's A. (16)

G Is that correct? (17)

M A's German anyway. (18)

(You reckon A's German. And you reckon B's -) (19)

G A Pakistani. (20)

(A Pakistani.) (21)

G Or some - or an immigrant or something. (22)

(Mmhm why do you reckon that?) (23)

G Well it's the way they - they're speaking. (24)

M Speak - the accent. (25)

G The accent - (26)

(Uhuh.) (27)

G You know like - somebody from Glasgow has a heavy accent
you just the way they s - their accent. (28)

(Uhuh. Why do you reckon he's a German?) (29)

M The way he speaks. (30)

(Mmhm.) (31)

M He can't speak properly. (32)

G It's - sort of broken English. (33)

(Mm - can you give me an example of that?) (34)

M "Well I con't I still don't - I don't I don't quite
understand you". (35)

(Uhuh.)

. . . .

Comments on extract 1

- (3) G immediately identifies the talk as a particular kind of speech event: a discussion.
- (4) M has been most forcibly struck by a voice which sounds German: he keeps trying to get this point accepted until (17)!
- (5) G also proposes nationality as something it might be relevant to say about the recordings. In other words, G is trying to find out what I want him to talk about - he is producing his account in the context of an experiment.
- (8) G justifies his interpretation by comparing the voice on the tape with a group of speakers which he claims sound the same. This is a common way of backing up interpretations of speech material. Cf (28). He also introduces an idiosyncratic term for a speech act: "scratch out".
- (10) G has apparently taken it for granted that the speakers on tape are pupils (and teacher?) since he mentions this only incidentally.
- (17) G is still producing an account in an attempt to find the "correct" solution. He assumes that there is one answer which fits (and which I want).
- (24) - (30) Various terms ("accent", "the way he speaks") are introduced to describe speech behaviour, but these are not clearly distinguished by the informants.

Extract 2

W and V are IInd form boys. This extract is from about ten minutes into the discussion. (Ref. Y10.3.)

(Did you get any impression of what the people think of each other? - - - You know, what their attitudes to each other are. How they're getting on.) (1)

- V (uninterpretable) Well about half way down they're starting to have an argument, C says "I can't agree a smash can do nothing". (2)
- (Mm.) (3)
- V If eh - (4)
- (Yeah you think that's -) (5)
- W A and B get on well - I think, but not A and C. (6)
- V But not C. (7)
- (Mmhm - does that tell you anything about who they might be then?) (8)
- V Well C might be a pupil. Or a prefect. (9)
- (Yeah.) (10)
- V And the other two might be teachers. (11)
- (But you think a prefect would argue with - teachers?) (12)
- V Yeah. (13)
- W If it was a sort of meeting. (14)
- V If it was a sort of discussion. They would be. But they wouldn't just say it right out in class, that they didn't agree. If it was this sort of programme thing. (15)
- (Yeah you're getting back to your idea of - a television programme?) (16)
- V Yeah. (17)
- (Yeah. Why don't you think he'd - argue like that in class?) (18)
- V If they were having a discussion in class they would - but not during the subject. (19)
- W It might be - - they would do it in a debate - if they were having a debate but - they wouldn't just shout out

- to the teacher in class that he doesn't agree. (20)
- (Yeah - why not?) (21)
- V Because - he's scared he might get the cane or - he might. (22)
- (Uhuh - do you agree with that Stewart?) (23)
- W Aye - he wouldnæ shout out in class. (24)
- (You never shout out in class?) (25)
- V Or may be he's been told to speak freely and - not be scared to say anything against what the teacher says. (26)
- (Yeah - I mean is that the way you - sort of behave in class?) (27)
- V I don't shout out I don't agree but - maybe I would if - he said we're having a debate - and you can speak freely. Most people would - say they don't agree - with the teachers. (28)

. . .

Comments on extract 2

- (2) V identifies the beginning of a new kind of speech event: an argument.
- (12) I explicitly question V's suggestion to force him into justifying it.
- (14) - (15) This tactic is successful. Different speech events are distinguished: argument and normal teaching (by implication), a meeting and a discussion.
- (19) W quite clearly distinguishes rules for two different speech events: a discussion in class and "during the subject". He is adamant on this but does not seem to be able to be more explicit.

- (20) Another type of speech event (debate) and its rules are proposed to justify the original interpretation.
- (28) Apparently neither V nor W can be more explicit. They both clearly know there are different rules for the different speech situations, but it no longer makes sense to ask why. Their statements appear to have the status of tautologies for them (assuming of course that my probing techniques were adequate).

Extract 3

The informant is a postgraduate (sociology) student. This extract is from after about half an hour's discussion. (Ref. A3.7.)

(You say they've been asked.) (1)

Well this is the confusing bit actually. - oh do you mean been asked as opposed to having a discussion on it? (2)

(Mm.) (3)

Well I think something led up to it. (4)

(What? - Well who could have asked them?) (5)

Perhaps - it could have been just about anybody. An adult perhaps. Somebody slightly older. Do you want me to be more specific? (6)

(Yeah. Could it have been just about anybody?) (7)

Yeah I think so. Well it's not likely to have been their parents. (8)

(Why not?) (9)

Because I don't think that a kid would tell his parents that he'd stabbed his mate in the back. (10)

. . .

(Could it have been one of his mates?) (11)

- I don't think they would talk about it in those terms. (12)
- (What terms would they talk about it in?) (13)
- More in terms of present terms. (14)
- . . .
- (Do you think it's possible that one of their mates asked the question which started him off?) (15)
- I've just said it's possible but unlikely. (16)
- (Why?) (17)
- Because again this bit about talking about cowboy guns. I mean do you honestly think that kids would talk about it in those terms? I don't think so. (18)
- . . . ((about ten minutes' discussion omitted))
- (Well say he's telling the story to one of his mates. Is it not the kind of story he'd tell to one of his mates?) (19)
- Yeah but in those terms?! ((loud protest)) (20)
- (In what terms then?) (21)
- OK. I'm from the east end of London, and I'm a working class kid, and I'm a real hard headed little tom, I'm not going to sound as though I disapproved of what I'd done, OK? (22)
- (Well what are you going to say then?) (23)
- I once stuck this thing in one of my mate's backs and if you're not bloody careful, I'll do the fucking same to you, sort of thing. ((laughs)) (24)
- . . .

Comments on extract 3

- (10) A rule is proposed concerning what children would tell different categories of people.

- (12) And about the style of language appropriate for different people.
- (18) Under the pressure of continual probes, the informant starts to appeal explicitly to what she knows "we both know" about speech behaviour.
- (20 - 22) Again, no justification of the proposed interpretation can be found except an appeal to our taken-for-granted shared knowledge of how people talk. It was only with student informants that this stage in producing accounts was reached, since I felt entitled to probe them for a longer time, and since they were less awed by my presence.
- (24) The informant finally seems to feel goaded into "saying what you want if that will make you happy". (I take it that the ambiguous last sentence might refer to my pestering her with questions which are now seen as belabouring the obvious.)

These brief extracts give examples of informants searching for pattern in speech behaviour, and justifying the order which they find, in various ways: by hearing the talk as examples of different speech events and different speech acts; by hearing speakers as members of different groups; by invoking rules and by appealing to "what everyone knows" about speech behaviour. By systematically investigating the kind of accounts briefly illustrated here, we can thus explore some of the underlying methods which people use to find order in, and impute meaning to, social activities.

9.6. FEATURES OF SPEECH AND KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIETY

More fundamental than "what meanings do listeners find in speech

events?" is the question "how do they find these meanings?". This is an alternative formulation of: how is discourse ~~made~~ intelligible? What features of behaviour do people attend to, and what knowledge of social behaviour do people draw upon, in order to make sense of, comment on and account for episodes of speech behaviour?

It should be clear now that a study of speakers' accounts and interpretations of speech situations continues precisely the same study as earlier chapters, my specific concern in chapter 8 being to investigate how hearers make sense of connected discourse and how they hear discourse as coherent.

Informants used many different kinds of "evidence" and "knowledge" in order to interpret or account for the tape-recorded extracts. For example, informants commented on speakers' intonation, pronunciation, accents, and pitch of voice (a deep voice might signify age or "being African"). They were usually unable to be more explicit about such judgements (e.g. "It's just the way he's speaking", or "It's just his accent"), but they were prepared to base far-reaching conclusions, about people's nationality or social class, on such evidence. They commented on the kind of speech act used by speakers (who asks the questions, the use of terms of address or slang or swearing, etc.) in order to justify interpretations of who was speaking. They compared the voices on tape with other speakers that the informants knew. (E.g. "Well he sounds like my doctor and my doctor's African" or " . . . I had a bird from Leicester and he sounds like her little brother" or "He sounds like a Pakistani trying to scratch out (sic) 'fares please'".) The informants also commented on the internal logic of what the speakers said, and on knowledge or experience which certain people can be expected to have. For example,

young people were assumed to have different ideas from "old fogeys", and friends were assumed to know each other's biographies.

In citing these different kinds of evidence, informants were invoking commonsense knowledge about the different kinds of language used by different social classes; experience of hearing types of people speak in comparable ways; notions about how knowledge is socially distributed, and so on. The present experiment is therefore one way of recovering some of the many social assumptions which underlie our performance in face-to-face conversation.⁸

9.7. OVER-INTERPRETING STEREOTYPED FEATURES OF SPEECH

It is easy to show then that listeners draw on a wide range of knowledge in making sense of conversation - a point often not appreciated by theoretical linguists.

However, an important characteristic of the informants' interpretations of the recordings is their claim to justifiably attach highly specific meanings to a restricted set of features of speech. That is to say, listeners over-interpret or are hyper-conscious of a few features, which therefore become stereotypes and carry too great a weight of connotation. It was frequently the most minimal and most ambiguous cues which informants used to justify the most sweeping inferences: about a speaker's social class, intelligence, job or personality.

The feature of speech remarked on most often was the frequent use

⁸ It is in its attempt to explore some of the detailed organisation of unstated assumptions that determine speakers' interpretations of social behaviour, that this chapter draws most heavily on ethnomethodology.

of "you know" (in extract 2): this was mentioned by seventeen out of twenty pairs of children. This verbal habit - which most people⁹ have to some extent - was also made to carry the greatest weight of interpretation. It was taken variously to indicate, among other things, that the speakers were: working class, not well off, went to a secondary modern school in England, came from Liverpool or came from the east end of London.

The feature remarked on next most often (thirteen out of twenty pairs) was that (in extract 1) one speaker "asks all the questions". This was consistently given a restricted range of interpretation: either the speaker is a teacher, or an interviewer, or he is in some way dominant or in charge. This interpretation, altogether more reasonable as it happens, indicates a clear rule or expectation about speech behaviour and questioning rights and will be referred to again (in 9.9) in connection with rules of classroom speech behaviour.

The other most commonly remarked features of speech and their interpretations were: the surfeit of details in A's story (extract 2), mentioned in ten out of twenty cases, and considered appropriate only when talking to adults or teachers, and not to peer group friends; saying "we was" for "we were" (7/20), often interpreted as indicating low intelligence, or being Cockney (these were independent interpretations!); the lack of swearing (in extract 2) (6/20) taken to indicate that the boys were talking to an adult; and the long answers without a break in extract 2 (6/20) indicating again that the boys were speaking to an adult and not to their friends.

⁹ Including most of my informants, although they were often unconscious of using it!

Looking at the interpretations offered from the other end, the most commonly repeated interpretation was that almost all informants classed the speakers in extract 2 as either working class or not well educated or both. Seventeen out of twenty pairs of pupils made this judgement, based (a) on only a couple of minutes' tape-recording, and (b) on a few over-interpreted features of speech. Some informants were much more specific; e.g. one pair of informants proposed that the speakers came from a busy family with a lot of brothers and sisters from a working class home in an industrial area; other informants suggested that they were not interested in school; others that they were skinheads. (For example, a postgraduate student said: "They sound a bit like skinheads from their voice.")

Clearly there is very little in the extracts to justify such detailed hypotheses. These classifications are based almost entirely on dubious notions of the relationship between "accent", social class and education, and based on very small cues. A small set of perceptual cues of widely different kinds tends to be picked out and made to carry the greatest weight of interpretation. These cues have the status of stereotypes. They are categorical; i.e. saying "we was" or saying "you know" were specifically interpreted, although almost everyone says "you know" sometimes, and "we was" may be due to either social class or geographical variation. These data are therefore further examples of Labov's (1966) findings that people perceive speech in categorical terms, but that variable rules are required to describe their speech performance.

It must be emphasised again however that the point of quoting such dubious inferences is not to deride them. For the informants were generally correct in saying, for example, that the speakers were

working class east end Londoners. The point of interest is how people justify often correct inferences by citing dubious evidence. The task of research is to explicate how such "sloppy" rationality can nevertheless bring off interpretations which are often acceptable for all practical purposes. One can only assume that judgements of speech behaviour were in fact based on features that listeners are unable to explicate. For normal practical purposes, listeners would not be required to justify their interpretations of conversation in the way demanded by the experiment. One way that speakers can get away with "sloppy" rationality is because of their drawing on such a wide range of knowledge to cross-check likely interpretations.

9.8. THE STRUCTURE OF THE ACCOUNTS

"I had a teacher, he used to say 'There's only one rule in my classroom - no sky-larking'." (Schoolboy aged about 16, fieldnotes 3.28.)

The most general concern in the research reported here, is how speech behaviour is made intelligible or interpretable to its hearers.

The experiment shows some ways in which rules or norms are related to our interpretation or perception of speech events. Among other things, it is our knowledge of how different types of people can be expected to behave, which makes their speech behaviour intelligible to us. (This is a general problem for discourse analysis. This chapter, like chapter 8, could have been written more explicitly from this point of view.) The knowledge which speakers have of speech rules provides an orderliness in what they observe: more succinctly, they use rules to make sense of behaviour.

Sacks (1972a) has discussed this kind of interpretation of social behaviour with reference to what he calls "viewers' maxims" such as the following (my formulation):

if one observes people behaving in a certain way, that can be explained by a norm or rule of social behaviour which relates categories of people, then (a) one will see the people as members of those categories, and (b) one will see the activities as conforming to the norm.

In studies in the psychology of perception, it is commonplace to say that one does not just "see" anything: one sees what one expects to see, or at least interprets what one sees in the light of what one expects to see.

The accounts I elicited from my informants show them actually using and quoting rules and norms of speech behaviour, in order to justify their interpretations to the interviewer/researcher.

The general form of the accounts is as follows. Informants propose specific interpretations of "what is going on" on the tape-recordings. That is, they "jump to conclusions" about the utterances they hear, stating who the speakers are, what they "have in mind", and so on. When challenged, they justify their interpretations by claiming that these are specific cases of general situations for which they invoke rules. The rules are in some sense taken for granted and tautological for the informants, since there quickly comes a point where it no longer makes sense to question the rules. The only justification of the interpretations is then to appeal to "what everybody knows" about conversations.

The aim of the research is then to explicate what everybody does know, for example, about what features of conversations to attend to

in order to make sense of them. It turns out that this core of taken-for-granted shared knowledge is much greater than "everybody" realises. Speakers can quote the surface rules, but these, along with the methods for applying them, are taken for granted.

9.9. SPEECH RULES AS EXPLANATIONS OF SPEECH EVENTS

I will now give specific examples of how knowledge of social rules governs and justifies our perception of speech events. Both tape-recorded extracts (see appendix B to this chapter) involve an adult talking to teenage boys, one in a teaching/discussion situation, the other in a radio interview. In informants' accounts of these speech events, dozens of generalisations were therefore offered about normal teacher-pupil, interviewer-interviewee and adult-child interaction. Rules are typically expressed in the form of a general proposition, and therefore are well suited to form part of accounts and commentaries of social action. Some of the actual rule-like statements are quoted verbatim in appendix C. It is rather pointless to quote speakers' rules for classroom speech behaviour in isolation; they are only meaningful when contrasted with rules for casual conversation among friends; or for talking to adults as opposed to children; or with rules for other partly similar speech events such as an interview. For example, it is a feature of teachers' speech that they ask a lot of questions. But in order to know what implication this has for pupils, one must also look at their rules for other speech situations, to discover in what contexts questioning is considered appropriate or not. Some kind of contrastive analysis of speech rules is therefore necessary. The rules for classroom situations below are therefore followed by informants' rules for peer group situations.

The following "rules" for speech behaviour are distilled from more and less general statements given in the loosely structured interviews. Some rules clearly subsume others.

Teacher-pupil interaction was described as "not a conversation", and "not a genuine discussion". This involved rules such as:

- (1) Teacher-pupil interaction follows a strict question-answer structure.
- (2) Teachers cause pupils to speak, elicit clarifications, correct what pupils say. Conversely pupils are expected to justify all their answers.
- (3) Teacher-pupil interaction must remain "to the point", no idle gossip is permitted (contrast rules 8, 10, 11, 14).
- (4) Teachers expect respect to be shown to them, e.g. by addressing them as "sir".
- (5) Pupils may not swear, laugh or use slang when speaking to a teacher.
- (6) It is not expected that a pupil will speak frankly to a teacher unless he knows him personally.
- (7) Pupils are not expected to say they do not agree with a teacher unless specifically permitted to do so in the context of a class discussion.¹⁰
- (8) Certain subjects are restricted to class discussions and would not be discussed e.g. with friends.

All these rules have to do with aspects of speech behaviour in a specific social situation which informants felt was expected or

¹⁰ A "class discussion" is therefore a different kind of speech event from normal teaching and has its own rules. This comes out very clearly in extract 2 above.

normal. They are an expression of constraints, rights and obligations under which speakers are conscious of operating. The rules for teacher-pupil interaction make more sense when contrasted with informants' rules for peer group interaction.¹¹ Again the rules have been abstracted from the interview transcripts.

Talking to friends was characterised as "casual", "relaxed", "natural", etc. This atmosphere involved rules such as the following.

It is appropriate:

- (9) to "waffle on", "not to talk in sentences", to talk in a way which is fragmented, less coherent, "just in bits";
- (10) to interrupt, cut in, butt in, contradict;
- (11) to use slang, swear, laugh, giggle;
- (12) to make things up, exaggerate, boast a bit;
- (13) to tell things dramatically, and give examples from personal experience;
- (14) to talk about football, girls, fights, homework, something that has just happened (for boys).

It is inappropriate:

- (15) to maintain a strict question-answer sequence;
- (16) to use big words;
- (17) to go into too much detail about anything.

¹¹ Rules for this speech situation emerged rather more readily - probably because the recording of a teaching situation was played first. Rules for talk with friends emerged more naturally in connection with extract 2, by which time informants had "warmed up". In other words, fairly lengthy interviews seem to be the only way to get at speakers' rules. An attempt to get pupils to express rules of speech behaviour in open-ended questionnaires was more or less a failure. If informants are to be pushed into making explicit what they normally take for granted, this can only be done by probing in an interview. The need to interview and then to transcribe the interviews of course cuts down the number of informants who can be studied.

There are no obvious differences between the sets of rules elicited from younger and older children and adults. Generalisations were produced in the same form by all three groups. And none of the rules given appear to be contradictory. Rather the rules given all appear to build up to the same picture, although no one informant gave all the rules.

As far as the complexity of the models is concerned, it seems also that 13 to 14 year old children can formulate explicit models of speech behaviour for the social situations discussed, which are more or less as complex as those offered by well-educated adults. One way to put a gross check ¹² on this claim is simply to count the number of terms which informants used in the free interview situation in order to discuss the tape-recordings. To interpret the tapes, and give satisfactory rules, informants had to use terms for speech acts, speech events and categories of speakers. The average number of terms given by informants in the three groups is as follows. The range is given in brackets in each case.

	terms for speakers	terms for speech acts	terms for speech events
younger children	27(14-43)	13(7-20)	5(3-7)
older children	24(18-35)	18(9-28)	5(3-8)
adults	35(27-49)	21(14-29)	6(4-10)

¹² Strict comparisons between adults and children are not possible since the adults were interviewed individually and the children in pairs, on the assumption that the children would talk more freely if interviewed with a friend. The averages are derived from totals of terms elicited in each interview as a whole.

Adults and older children tended to use more terms for speech acts and speech events than younger children, but there is too much overlap to argue that adults' models of speech behaviour are more complex.

9.10. INFORMANTS' AND RESEARCHER'S MODELS

If this chapter were intended to stand on its own, I could continue along various lines. I might, for example, study in more detail the different categories of social knowledge on which informants draw in order to interpret speech; or I might discuss what relation this consciously invoked knowledge bears to the knowledge routinely used by listeners in the course of conversation. But I have taken the analysis far enough in order to throw more light on the previously proposed (researcher's) descriptions of teacher-talk.

Most of the points of comparison between "lay" and "professional" models of language-use, have been made implicitly in the course of the chapter. To summarise, the main point is as follows. Sociolinguistic descriptions, including my own above, are typically based on concepts such as categories of speakers, speech acts, speech events, and rules. But "lay" speakers, including school-children, can themselves produce "explanations" of speech behaviour which draw explicitly on such concepts. Thus they may produce a descriptive rule for teacher-pupil talk that:

teacher-pupil interaction follows a strict question-answer sequence.

Sociolinguists will of course want to arrive at a more precise specification than this. They may want, for example, to measure percentages of questions which are followed by a direct answer (as

Churchill n.d.). Or they may want to distinguish different types of questions (e.g. see Barnes 1969 on "pseudo questions" in teacher-talk, or Churchill n.d.). Or they may want to specify more carefully the characteristic forms of question-answer sequences typical of formal teaching (as Sinclair et al 1972). But to be more specific in this way does not make the description any different in principle. Such sociolinguistic descriptions still use the same concepts as those proposed by "lay" speakers.

This point is not necessarily a destructive criticism of researchers' descriptions of spoken interaction. In an informal way, one might say that the general aim of the present research is to set up a description of how teachers talk to their pupils, which is at once precise and of sociolinguistic interest, and also meaningful to teachers themselves. (I raised this issue of "recognisable reality" in chapter 1.) If one wants to discover what kind of description of speech behaviour is "meaningful" or "relevant" to speakers themselves, the simplest way is to look at the kind of descriptions, explanations and accounts which they themselves give.

APPENDIX A. TEACHERS' ACCOUNTS OF LESSONS

As an appendix to this chapter on pupils' accounts of teaching, I will comment briefly on one form of teachers' accounts of lessons. The data here comprise eighty lesson report sheets made out by eighteen teachers. After lessons on English as a foreign language at a Summer School for French children, the teachers were given entirely blank report sheets and asked to fill in "how they thought the lesson had gone", the rationale being that this would be of help to the course organisers. The lessons on which they reported were small group lessons for which the teachers were all using the same prepared grammatical material; they were not primarily "conversation" lessons, rather "talk and chalk" lessons or grammatical exercises.

These lesson reports are accounts of pupils' behaviour, and, as we shall see, primarily accounts of pupils' speech behaviour. They show some of the concepts which teachers use to categorise pupils' (and their own) behaviour in class. As with any accounts, the reports are, at least partly, justificatory: that is, written with one eye on persuading the reader that they had managed their lessons successfully. Before analysing these aspects of the reports more systematically, I will quote three complete reports.

- (1) Conversation OK and the girls were all willing to speak.
- (2) Progress a little slower, but still quite satisfactory. Grammar good, but pronunciation not so good. I will have to go over it again to make sure the kids understand it.
- (3) George - not forthcoming - makes very little attempt to use English. I am uncertain as to his ability. Daniel - a little hesitant - does make the effort. Bruno - quite good, fairly

confident. As a group, speak only when spoken to, as I expected, but they do try to answer correctly.

From these three examples, one can see that teachers regard specific things as relevant to giving a report on a lesson: for example, rate of progress, pupil characteristics such as "forthcoming" or "hesitant", and notions of appropriate speech behaviour. These aspects were picked out from an indefinite range of things which the teachers saw as not relevant. I will now make some more systematic comments on these aspects of teachers' concerns in reporting lessons.

First then, many comments (almost eighty, i.e. an average of 1 per report) were made about the teaching as a speech event. The largest number of comments (38) referred simply to getting the pupils to speak and to contribute to the lesson; i.e. these are comments which correspond to my ELICIT category in the coding scheme (see 6.1). Examples are:

"X and Y were terrible - no contributions",
"the girls were all willing to speak",
"X had to be prompted to ask questions",
"they spoke only when spoken to",
"they were slow in answering",
"X is not forthcoming".

The second main preoccupation of the teachers was with pupils' understanding (mentioned 27 times), i.e. comments corresponding to my category CHECK OTHERS' UNDERSTANDING. Examples are:

"they understood the lesson",
"they are very quick to understand",
"they found (a part of the lesson) difficult",
"X was slow to understand".

Note here that the teachers are not simply mentioning understanding in a neutral fashion. They are making judgements and decisions about when understanding is occurring and when it is not, and therefore interpreting what their pupils "had in mind". One taken-for-granted assumption of teachers is made explicit here. Only one teacher admitted that he might have been mistaken in his judgement:

"They understood (I think!)."

Similarly teachers assume they know when pupils are paying attention. This again is a major preoccupation (mentioned 11 times):

"X is very inattentive",

"X was half asleep",

"everybody listened",

"good attention from everyone".

These comments correspond to the ATTRACT ATTENTION category.

These preoccupations of teachers are not presented as particularly newsworthy in their own right. They are presented mainly to illustrate that the kinds of concerns which the coding scheme previously presented as objectifying what teachers think they are doing, is "correct" insofar as it reflects teachers' own, spontaneously expressed, relevancies in reporting "teaching". In other words, they give some "emic" validity to the categories of the coding scheme. The categories of the coding scheme can therefore be shown to be a more systematic representation of members' categories for thinking about speech behaviour in the classroom. It reveals the categories as members' categories, and does not therefore claim any privileged status for them. But having seen the categories for what they are, the coding scheme then goes on to state in more detail how teachers define the teaching situation by using speech acts which fall into those categories.

APPENDIX B. TRANSCRIPTS OF THE TAPE-RECORDED EXTRACTS USED IN THE
EXPERIMENTS

These transcripts, without the note on context, were given to the informants to follow as they listened to the tapes.

(1)¹³

- A. . . . in a school, you think that corporal punishment is all right at home, but eh - but not in a school.
- B. No, I don't think that. I said until a certain level, the cane I am against.
- A. Until a certain level. I don't understand you.
- B. Ah yes. I explained ten minutes ago.
- A. Well, I still don't - until a certain level, I don't - I don't quite understand what you mean.
- B. The cane I am against, slaps I am for.
- A. Oh, yeah, I see.
- C. I don't agree. A smash can do nothing if eh -
- A. A slap.
- C. A slap can do nothing if eh, I don't know. A text to learn by heart do nothing.
- A. You think that a text is just the same thing to give eh - something like em lines to write out or to learn - is just the same thing?
- C. It's not the same thing. I don't say that. It has no more effect.
- A. It has no more effect.

¹³ The reader will note that I analysed part of this extract from the researcher's point of view in chapter 5.

- C. It just can produce a very bad reaction on the boy. And and after you can't stop this reaction, and you are obliged to -
- A. And you think this is always the case.
- C. I don't know, it's not perhaps always the case. But I know and I know . . .

(Context: recorded by myself during a discussion between a native English speaking teacher and two French pupils aged 17.)

(2)

- A. The only bit which ever influenced me is once when I was little, we all see about a two hour long film of Robin Hood in school. Because every Wednesday afternoon we used to have films, you know. Because we was only in Juniors. They used to sort of give us about four films every Wednesday afternoon. They showed us one about two hours long with Robin Hood. And that night we all got about two bob off our mums and dads and went and bought a ball of string, you know, bamboo and a couple of those little plant sticks, you know, for arrows, sharpened them up with pencil sharpeners. I stabbed me mate in the back. It only sort of went in a little bit, but it cut him, you know. I went right up behind him with a sort of little bamboo stick and went pah in his back. He went running off crying, I thought "what's up with him?"
- B. What really gets me is when you get these little toy guns, you know. I myself () they should have these cowboy guns, you know, they're all right. But you get these other kind of ones that really, you know, look like detective guns. Now if you get

some little kid, you know, they'll find a gun or something, and
it may be a real gun.

(Context: recorded from the radio; A and B are London teenagers being
interviewed for a schools programme on violence in films.)

APPENDIX C. EXAMPLES OF RULE-LIKE STATEMENTS

These are direct quotes from the interviews, included simply as examples of rules elicited about different aspects of the speech events (see 9.10).

1. Well I don't think that people of about 14 discuss the effects that films have in promoting violence.

(Why not?)

I don't know, there just seems to be this sort of attitude at present not to discuss anything because it's not the in-thing at that age group.

(13 year old girls.)

2. I don't think anybody talks in school about how they were affected in their childhood.

Not unless it's in a class discussion.

(13 year old boys.)

3. I don't think he's just talking to a friend.

(Why not?)

Just the sound of it. Just the way he says it and everything. I think it would be phrased differently.

(16 year old girls.)

4. (Say he was telling the story to a friend?)

He'd add a bit more gore. He'd boast a bit more.

(13 year old boys.)

5. Well A cuts into C halfway through a sentence, you know, he doesn't finish the sentence. . . . It would be termed rude if he did that. In a formal conversation. It's not really thought of if you're just talking to somebody.

(13 year old girls.)

6. (What would be the differences if he was talking to his friend?)

Well, I think there would be a bit more slang in it.

(Postgraduate student.)

7. It's a lot more disjointed. If you're with somebody you know, you just sort of waffle on.

(16 year old boys.)

8. (What do people of that age talk about?)

Football, girls. I mean just anything that happened the night before. Or where you're going tonight, you know.

(16 year old boys.)

APPENDIX D. LIST OF ALL TERMS FOR SPEECH ACTS USED BY INFORMANTS

The list is unordered.

ask	put in more detail
ask questions	hesitate
say	say a long sentence
scratch out (<u>sic</u>)	say a long paragraph
disagree	butt in
give one's view	explain
mention	admit
tell	agree
pronounce	contradict
go (e.g. "he went 'hi!'")	get round to
punctuate	get onto
read it straight	catch someone out
read out	go on
answer	read something off
use (a word)	stutter
refer	use bad language
laugh	emphasise
use slang	correct
change words	repeat
say outright	cut into
start off	give an example
get onto the point	describe
bring up a subject	come out with
come right out with	say something right out
speak	shout out

shout
wander on
come up with
complain
make up
go into detail
add details
exaggerate
just say
go on about
put something into (a
discussion)
boast
rant on
use strong language
get (= find) words
prompt
chip in
repeat
quote
tell someone off
build up
imply
get at something
admit
disapprove
threaten
comment on

speak clearly
say something against what somebody says
speak freely
speak up
call
swear
make a point
get into (a subject)
end (a subject)
play down
pour out
reply
clarify
wander on from point to point
wander off the point
continue
deny
communicate
rephrase
pause
get at someone
go at it
indicate
tell something with life in it
get something over to someone
get something across to someone
go onto (another subject)

give an instance	disallow
lead onto	get at something (e.g. I don't see what you're . . .)
switch (topics)	get off (the subject)
waffle on	go onto
bring up a point	put a question
go back	lead a discussion
recap	elicit (information)
put something over	giggle
tell a story	utter
get into a story	interject
justify	put stress on (how . . .)
describe	put something (e.g. rudely)
give a reason	scream
offer an opinion	clam up
phrase	throw the ball back in the other speaker's court
put across (a point of view)	relate
churn out	attack
push	turn the discussion back
interrupt	rushing it out
jump in on top of	break off in the middle of a sentence
express	make a mistake

CHAPTER 10

A SUMMARY AND SOME EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

In this final chapter I will summarise what I have tried to do in this study, propose some educational implications, and mention very briefly a wider topic which I find of interest, and which provides the research reported here with a broader perspective.

10.1. SUMMARY

I have tried in this study to develop and integrate ideas along a fairly broad front, rather than to analyse a very restricted aspect of teacher-pupil talk in great detail. Any one of the central chapters (i.e. 5 to 9) could alone be expanded into a full-length study. In more recent work (partly reported in Stubbs 1973, reproduced in Appendix E), I have begun, for example, to analyse in much more detail aspects of the sequential structure of spoken discourse. The aim in the present study has been however to integrate work on social interaction from different areas, as well as to analyse certain aspects of teachers' talk.

Therefore, as well as (1) presenting a critique and development of some of the relevant literature, the study has tried (2) to present various "findings" and basic descriptive information on classroom interaction, (3) to relate the findings through appropriate concepts, and (4) to discuss and experiment with different methodologies. These different aspects are not strictly separable, especially

in a new field such as the sociolinguistics of face-to-face interaction, but, for convenience, I will summarise the study under these headings.

(1) I have brought together work from academic fields which are not generally discussed within the same study, in order to show that similar ideas (on methodology, conceptual analysis, etc.) have been developed, often in mutual ignorancel, in different areas, such as classroom research, sociolinguistics and microsociology. One central example here was my criticism and development of some sociolinguistic work on speech functions. On the one hand, I have regrouped and developed some of the concepts proposed by Hymes, and used them to make more sophisticated the type of category system used in much educational research on verbal interaction. On the other hand, I have shown that these concepts of speech function are in principle little different from the category systems proposed by educational researchers.

(2) The discussion of different concepts of social interaction allowed me, at the level of "findings", to begin to apply sociolinguistic concepts to an analysis of teaching behaviour. Relatively little research on education involves direct observation and description of teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom itself, and almost none of this observational work has drawn on sociolinguistic concepts.

¹ Cf Merton 1961 on multiple independent discoveries in science: "A factor of great sociological significance in the development of science has been the frequency with which identical discoveries have been made by scientists working independently of one another." Merton (as he admits) was not of course the first to discover this phenomenon! Cf Goethe: "Alles Gescheidte ist schon gedacht worden, man muss nur versuchen es noch einmal zu denken." (Everything clever has already been thought of; we must just try to think of it again.) On the mutual isolation of different types of linguistic study from each other see again Pear 1971, quoted in 3.10 above.

The use of such concepts allowed me to provide certain basic descriptive information on a variety of English in use and on the speech situation which it constitutes. Much basic information of this kind is lacking in sociolinguistics, where theorising has left the analysis of data far behind. I have similarly provided certain basic information on children's and adults' ways of explaining and interpreting different situations of talk.

(3) I have argued however that "findings" make little sense in isolation. One of my aims has therefore been to provide a partial theoretical framework which can link aspects of classroom talk to social interaction in other situations. Work on verbal interaction in the classroom has tended to be an area where "facts" and "findings" have been collected, and enormous quantities of data "coded", without making sense of this work by relating it to more general concepts. My approach has been to concentrate on relatively small amounts of data, but to propose specific concepts which integrate ideas and "facts" from different areas. For example, the concept of "metacommunication" links: ways in which teachers and other speakers organise talk; different speech functions proposed by Hymes; various fragmentary data on how interactions are synchronised (e.g. by gaze direction); and accounts of speech situations, which are talk about talk.

(4) At the level of methodology, I have shown how different kinds of data (audio-recordings, observational notes, interviews, and reports) on spoken interaction can be linked. Many studies on social interaction have been unnaturally restricted by admitting only a narrow range of data as "legitimate". Other studies which have admitted different types of data have often failed to explore the

relations between them. In a field where no one approach is widely accepted or well worked out, it is appropriate to experiment with different kinds of data-collection and analysis.

Although the study thus explicitly covers a broad area, this summary should make clear some of the relations between the topics discussed. The most general reasons for the approach I have taken are as follows. On the one hand, it seems that any high-level sociolinguistic theory is only ultimately useful in so far as it tells us something about how people talk to each other. On the other hand, "findings" about people's interaction make little sense without a broad theoretical background.

On the one hand, more time arguably needs to be spent working out and integrating what has already been discovered about social interaction, rather than collecting new "findings". On the other hand, innovative methods and concepts need to be explored: it is not yet known what data are crucial in the study of social interaction.

And on the one hand, "facts", "findings" and basic descriptive information are important. But on the other hand, the concept of "facts" can be misleading in the social sciences², and especially in sociolinguistics where a central topic of study is people's interpretive and communicative competence, and where "facts" cannot be separated from people's interpretations of them.

So far, the parallels which I have drawn between sociolinguistic and educational research have been primarily at the level of

² See especially the papers in Filmer et al 1973, already referred to, for a clear discussion of the problematic character of "facts" for the social sciences.

methodology and descriptive theory. I want now to point to some implications for educational practice.

10.2. SOME EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

"Studying language in the classroom is not really 'applied' linguistics; it is really basic research." Hymes, in Cazden et al (eds.) 1972:xviii. (Emphasis in original)

Bearing in mind Hymes' caution (quoted), it is premature to be over-specific about "applications" of the type of research reported in the present study. However, it is possible to point to at least two areas on which the research bears.

There are a few discussions in the literature of large-scale implications of sociolinguistics for education. For example, Labov (1969, already quoted in 3.1 above) sees it as the task of sociolinguists to dispel the "illusion of linguistic deprivation". And Bernstein, having explored aspects of the complex relations between language, social class and educability, has recently (1972) pointed to the dangers of an oversimplified view of these relationships, and has stressed that "education cannot compensate for society" (1970). Other implications of sociolinguistics for education are discussed in several of the papers in Cazden et al eds. (1972). Different papers discuss: the importance of attitudes to nonstandard languages and dialects; differences between the language of the home and the language of the school; and the educational problems posed by bilinguals and by deaf children. This type of work is on a relatively macro-level compared with the present study.

I will here simply point to two areas on which the present

research bears: teacher training and teaching sociolinguistics in schools.

10.2.1. Teacher training

In their review of teacher-training methods, Morrison and McIntyre (1969:66-74) conclude that little is known about what kind of training affects teachers' behaviour in the classroom. But they also point out that, since there has been little direct observational research on the behaviour of teachers in the classroom itself, a major weakness of most training courses is "the absence of an adequate conceptual analysis of teaching" (p.73). I have pointed out above, especially in 7.2, how most research which is based on observation of teachers (e.g. Flanders' work) lacks an adequate underlying theory. Yet Flanders now considers the main value of his work to be in teacher-training.

The present study has attempted precisely to provide one type of more conceptually adequate analysis of what teaching consists of as a speech event. One of the main aims has been to show the types of complexity in the messages which teachers inevitably put across to their pupils. In particular I have shown the types of message which are implied by the whole structure and organisation of the teacher's talk, and have thus implied that "content" cannot be meaningfully separated from teaching methods. The way in which a teacher organises his lesson (by explaining, summarising, eliciting, prompting, editing, defining topics, and so on) is by no means a neutral transmission of subject material. The presentation "frames" the content, by defining its boundaries and relevancies (Bernstein 1971, and see 7.4 above). Teaching methods are therefore intimately bound up with content. I

have shown, at one particular level of linguistic analysis, some ways in which this "hidden curriculum" is transmitted to pupils (Snyder 1971).

A moral for teacher training may therefore be to make teachers more aware of these kinds of verbal complexity in classroom communication. Various researchers have shown that, in general, people are unaware of the detailed ways in which they are always communicating, about themselves and about their reactions to others. For example, E. T. Hall (1959) writes particularly well on how unaware people are that their notions of time and space are not absolutes, but are culturally learned, and how this can cause problems of misunderstanding in situations of cross-cultural communication. Goffman (*passim*) shows how people are inevitably and continually putting across an impression of self and of others. Many other examples of the unconscious patterning of social interaction could be quoted from the literature on sociolinguistics, kinesics and proxemics. A large amount of this literature deals then with (a) the complexity of social interaction at all levels, (b) the communicative importance of this complexity, and (c) our habitual unawareness of these phenomena. The inevitable unawareness of such routine features of interaction has been particularly the topic of ethnomethodology. Yet this kind of complexity is only beginning to be explored in observational studies of the classroom.³

³ For related data on this theme for the classroom see: Delamont (1973) on how messages are conveyed by a teacher's verbal style and physical appearance, and by the physical setting of the classroom; Hamilton (forthcoming) on how contradictory messages may be conveyed by the teacher and by the curriculum he is following; Parlett (*passim*) on the complexities which result when any instructional system is put into practice in a specific educational setting;
(cont.)

Various researchers also demand however that teachers be more aware of their own and of pupils' language. For example:

"Teachers do not examine with sufficient care the situations in which different forms of language are used, nor are they always very clear about what is being communicated." (Flower 1966:24).

Or,

"Teachers need a far more sophisticated insight into the implications of the language they themselves use, especially the register which we have called the language of secondary school education." (Barnes 1969:74).

These and similar statements (e.g. by Creber 1972, Herriot 1971, Lawton 1968, Trim 1959) do little more than pinpoint an area for study however. Given the arguments that I have put forward in the present study, research on the detailed patterns of classroom talk could make teachers more "aware" of two closely related aspects of the teaching process: the complex interpretations which pupils inevitably place on teachers' talk; and the assumptions about what teaching consists of, which are inherent in this talk, and which partly constitute its "hidden curriculum".

On the first of these, the kind of study presented here could show teachers, with detailed examples from actual recorded teaching situations, such features of their talk as: the way in which talk defines and sustains a social order and specific social relations in the classroom; how radically asymmetrical conversational rights are often considered appropriate for teacher and pupil, possibly even in

(continued) Torode (1972) on the intricate interpretive work which pupils perform on teachers' talk; Walker & Adelman (1972) on the complex meanings which build up over long stretches of time in the classroom; Mark Austin (personal communication) on how pupils' responses to classroom test situations may be affected by the tester's physical appearance. Some of these studies have already been referred to above.

a "discussion" situation; how implications of social control are inherent in "metacomments" which are typically heard as evaluative; how the type of questioning which is taken for granted in the classroom would not be tolerated in other social situations; and therefore how an evaluative atmosphere may be built up in the classroom, quite apart from explicit test situations, by the very organisation of the talk.

Such points are in no sense a "criticism" of teachers. Nor is it self-evident which (if any) of these points should be brought to teachers' attention: this is for teachers and teacher-trainers to decide. But they do provide potential input to a programme of teacher-training. And they are a demonstration of how deeply embedded in talk are features of the social order: taken for granted not only by teachers, but often by pupils as well (as I showed in chapter 9).

On the second point, several researchers have recently made very general statements to the effect that teaching involves many unexplored assumptions. For example,

"We are all constrained by our assumptions, often scarcely conscious, about the way we should teach." (Taylor 1971).

Or,

"(Teachers) must somehow cease to regard 'methods' as matters of belief while learning to understand and to question the assumptions underlying suggested approaches." (Hayes in Valdman ed. 1966:vi).

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Often such statements refer simply to making teachers more aware of pedagogical assumptions underlying their teaching methods. For example, a foreign language teacher may, knowingly or unknowingly, be using methods based on assumptions traceable to Behaviourism or cognitive psychology, to American structuralist linguistics, or Chomskyan linguistics, or to some other theory. But part of my argument in

this study has been that the teacher's whole talk embodies an underlying theory of what it is to teach somebody something. There may therefore be little point in introducing a new teaching method based on a different (explicit) theory, if the basic structure of the talk does not change.

Note one topic for investigation which this argument suggests. I have argued that specific messages are conveyed at a specific level of teachers' talk, namely by the use of speech acts with certain functions. But it is possible for a teacher to realise such speech acts in many different "styles", this being a topic I have explicitly not covered (see 5.2). A teacher might tell a pupil to "shut up" or to "keep a bit quieter, please"; on my description, these two utterances would have the same function of controlling the amount of talk in the classroom. In other words, a teacher may change his language at one level ("style") and yet still use the type of speech acts which I have described. It is quite possible therefore for a teacher to speak to his pupils "informally", to call them by their first names, to use colloquialisms, and so on - and yet to be constantly using utterances whose implications, at the level of speech acts, are as I have described.

Suppose then that one wished to introduce an "informal" style of teaching, for example "inquiry" or "discovery" methods, in which the teacher is intended not to maintain a directive or "organising" role. Any investigation of whether the resulting teaching method was essentially different from traditional classroom teaching would have to study whether the teacher's language had changed at the level I have described. If it has not, there may have been no real innovation: the style of language may have changed, without altering its functions -

just as there may be glossy covers on old textbooks - resulting in a subtle version of "innovation without change" (MacDonald & Rudduck 1971).

I would propose that any investigation of an educational innovation would have to take account of such functional messages of teachers' talk as I have described, which are inevitably all-pervasive, if implicit. Such situations would be investigable with the methods I have developed in this study. Teachers should arguably be aware, therefore, of the messages thus conveyed at the level of language functions and speech acts, and that, for example, there are different linguistic levels at which a speaker may be "open" or "nondirective".

Part of my argument in this study has been that it is possible to demonstrate in detail, on data collected in its social context, the kind of complex messages which are conveyed. Most of the work of other researchers referred to in this section makes some of the same points, but without reference to specific pieces of classroom interaction: the arguments are suggestive but only tenuously linked to actual talk. (Exceptions are Delamont 1973, Torode 1972.)

10.2.2. Teaching sociolinguistics

A recently published report of the Central Committee on English, The Teaching of English Language (S.E.D., 1972) recommends that the aim of English teaching should be

"to increase the child's awareness of and interest in the many uses of language and to familiarise him with the notion that language must be suited to the occasion and the situation in which it is used." (p.17)

The gist of the report is that children should be taught not "grammar", but sociolinguistic notions about language variation, appropriate usage, language as social behaviour, and different functions of

language. As part of this programme, pupils would be required to talk about and use (socio)linguistic concepts.⁴

But a preliminary to teaching pupils concepts and terms with which to talk about language-use, is to discover what terms and expressions children (and adults) already use, which concepts they can handle, and which they need to be taught. As I implied above (in chapter 9), hardly any research has been done on this. The only way to do this research is to listen to children talking about language. As a concrete example, in addition to those in chapter 9, consider the following extract from one of the interviews with two 12-year-old boys. We were discussing how different people speak differently:

MWS: Well, do you think it (the way they speak) depends whereabouts in Edinburgh it is?

Dave: Yeah, because you could go away up to the Dalrye⁵ way, they would say "kid", well, more than we would because they've got quite a few slums up there.

MWS: And you think they talk differently?

Dave: Well, some of them do.

MWS: What sort of differences would you get then?

Dave: Well, maybe they wouldn't mind if you were swearing about, maybe if you came to another district where old people live, quite well off, they would just sort of look out of the window if they heard people swearing.

⁴ This is precisely the type of work which is set out in Language in Use, Doughty et al 1971.

⁵ A district of Edinburgh.

Willie: In the slums you dinnae - you drop some letters and eh you
dinnae -

Dave: Yeah, that's right.

Willie: - talk all that well.

Dave: Well, they call their mum "ma", and "gie us a piece an'
jam" or something.

Willie: You dinnae get a good education in the slums.

This short extract illustrates several things which I discussed in chapter 9. First, the pupils have a very clear idea that different styles or forms of language are used in different geographical areas within a city, and when speaking to different people, according to their age, social class, and so on. They are aware that certain forms of language, such as swearing and types of sloppy speech (where speakers "drop some letters") are socially stigmatised, in that such language-use is associated with "the slums" and with lack of education. But they are clearly rather confused about the complex relationship between forms of language-use and districts of the city (Dalrye, the slums), social class (old people, "well off" people), poor education, and different social situations (given that most people swear at one time or another). Similarly they are not clear on the distinctions between different stigmatised forms of language: they lump together swearing, Scotticisms ("a piece an' jam") and abbreviated forms ("dropping letters"), confusing speech and writing in this last case.⁶ The points I made in chapter 9

⁶ Cf Bloomfield 1927: "The fact that almost anyone except a professed student of language explains matters of speech by statements which really apply only to writing, is of great psychologic interest." Despite its interest, it has been little studied in over forty years since Bloomfield's article.

amounted, in this respect, to saying that pupils of secondary school age are sophisticated in talking about speech behaviour, but not about the accompanying shifts in language form and structure. That is to say, they use many terms for speech acts, can formulate many rules of speech behaviour, and can be quite explicit about the notion that different language is appropriate for different situations. But they are unclear on different situational constraints on styles of speech, they use stereotypes in overinterpreting what may be common linguistic features, and so on.

This kind of investigation is therefore necessary in order to distinguish what pupils need to be taught about "the many uses of language" and what they already know. As I illustrated above (in 9.1) research into speakers' attitudes and notions about language-use has often simply condemned such attitudes as "a mixture of tradition, prejudice, myth and irrelevance" (Mittins et al 1970:14). Such research is of little help, unless it also explores what functions the "prejudices" serve, or how the "myths" are balanced with "correct" knowledge about language-use, or how irrelevancies can nevertheless sustain an orderly social world.

10.3. "IMAGINATIVE BACKGROUNDS" AND STYLE

"Every philosophy is tinged with the colouring of some secret imaginative background which never emerges explicitly into its train of reasoning."
Whitehead.

I want to end this study by shifting fairly sharply in topic and making some general comments on research style. This is a topic which I raised in chapter 1 (1.4, 1.5) but have only briefly referred to since. This section will not attempt to argue any points in

detail, but only to indicate an aspect of social science research which normally remains implicit: an almost unexplored, and even unadmitted, region of overlap between "social science" and "literature", and of dispute over the legitimacy and status of different approaches in social science. (On the legitimacy of approaches and different paradigms in the social sciences, see 1.5 above, and especially Hudson 1972a, and Smolicz 1970.)

Glaser and Strauss (1967:46) are among the few social science researchers to admit in print that the "theoretical sensitivity of a sociologist involves his personal and temperamental bent" (my emphasis). Hudson has taken up this argument in detail, to show how, in psychology and sociology, "style" is inseparable from "theory" and "findings". He writes, for example, (1966:29) of his own work:

"(my) book has a somewhat personal tone; 'I' occurs frequently. This is partially a matter of verbal incompetence (avoiding the first person singular is a scientific skill all its own); partially intentional. Research . . . is very much a personal affair. It engages the individual's personality; and in psychology there is a disconcerting tendency for the psychologists' personalities to reflect themselves in their theories, and even in their results. This being so, there seems every case for dropping the mask of objectivity in reporting psychological research, and describing the sequence of events naturalistically."

Hudson's Cult of the Fact (1972a) is one of the few attempts to integrate "psychological" and "literary" accounts of man's intellectual style.

I want here then simply to pick out a few points of contact between certain literary work, and the sociological accounts of man on which I have drawn in this study.

For myself at least, the ultimate appeal of the concept of social interaction behind the present study derives from the view of man

which it implies. Part of what this view of man involves can be seen by pointing to various parallels in the writings of sociology and literature.

I draw, for example, at various points on Goffman's work on social interaction. One of Goffman's central concepts is the dramaturgical metaphor, in which man is seen as continually having to "present himself" in different rôles to his audience, and in which interpersonal interaction is seen as an "information game". In spite of Goffman's assertion to the contrary (1959:78), the dramaturgical metaphor does imply that "all the world's a stage". In a review of Goffman's Relations in Public, Laurie Taylor (New Society, 2 December 1971) suggested that Goffman's "showbiz metaphor" fitted well with the general style of Goffman's work as a "comic production". Goffman's frequent use of literature as a source of data on social interaction reinforces this comic and theatrical "imaginative background" to his work.

The theme of social life as a "game"⁷ in which characters assume different rôles and masks is, of course, a central theme of much literature. To give only two examples, it is particularly explicit and well developed in Molière's plays and in Stendhal's novels.⁸ Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Webb et al (1966) take an unconventional line in recommending literature as a neglected source of concepts,

7 Cf Berne 1964 on "games people play" for a different, and again highly imaginative, development of this metaphor.

8 The very explicit discussion of the concepts of the natural, spontaneous man and the mask in W. G. Moore's discussion of Molière (Moore 1947) could, for example, be compared with the concepts of rôle and rôle distance in Goffman. As far as I know, this has not been done. (I use French and German examples in this section simply because most of my reading has been in these literatures.)

anecdotes and half-formulated theory, which can provide inspiration for the sociologist.

Goffman's frequent references to Sartre's theories of social interaction again underline the pervasive theatrical metaphor, as well as suggesting the implicit notion of the absurdity of man's social behaviour - the absurd being an explicit theme in existentialist views of man. One loose but suggestive way of linking the themes of the absurd and of the dramaturgical metaphor would be to study the form of dialogue in plays of the Theatre of the Absurd, which systematically parodies the routine patterns of everyday interaction. A well-known example is the opening scene of Ionesco's The Bald Primadonna which has Mr. and Mrs. Smith, a middle aged couple, conversing ^{IN} the style of dialogue found in foreign language textbooks.⁹

Sartre uses the notion of the absurd (partly) to refer to a universe which, in itself, is senseless, but whose sense must therefore be created by men themselves. The ways in which men go about creating and imputing meaning to the social world is the central topic of a phenomenological approach to sociology. Silverman (in Filmer et al 1972:2-4) discusses how Robbe-Grillet has, like recent sociologists, been influenced by phenomenology, and is concerned to explore the "reality" of everyday life. He argues that Robbe-Grillet's Last Year in Marienbad shares the central themes of a phenomenological sociology: the opaqueness of human motives, the creation of an everyday reality through talk, the inevitable imputation of meaning to the social world, and the essential indeterminacy of this meaning.

⁹ The only work I know which compares simulated dialogue in a foreign language textbook with real dialogue is Davies 1972. He compares a dialogue at the breakfast table with his own family's spontaneous breakfast-time talk, and finds considerable differences!

This notion of an absurd universe is therefore at least comparable to the ethnomethodologists' highly imaginative view that the social world is a fragile illusion of man's own interpretive work: an illusion which may be easily shattered by apparently small disruptions. The use of disruptions as a methodological estrangement device with which to render the routine social world "anthropologically strange" (Garfinkel 1967) is precisely the use which Brecht makes of Verfremdungseffects in the theatre (cf 4.8 above), Brecht's work being also sometimes close to the Theatre of the Absurd. Kafka's work is also frequently discussed in terms of its use of estrangement devices. Another link here is that Kafka's work is also analysable in terms of his obsession with language and meaning and with situations of distorted communication which he portrays. (Steiner 1967 provides an analysis of these themes in Kafka.)

Note a very general implication here. If comparable concepts and analyses of social life are proposed in sociology and in literature, then this throws doubt on any claim which sociology might make to be "scientific" and different in principle and in status from anecdote. This is not to say that sociology is merely anecdotal, but that it involves anecdote. This is part of the criticism which ethnomethodology has made of traditional sociology (see especially Moerman 1968¹⁰). But part of my point here is that ethnomethodology itself draws on an unexplicated background, whose imaginative power should not be neglected. It should be clear that I am not here criticising

10 " . . . it should come as no news that some of our hard-won anthropological truths are commonplace old wives' tales There is, I think, some reason to believe that the Grô-Magnon talked among themselves about culture change in much the same way as next year's journals will." (Moerman 1968.)

the status of ethnomethodology as a folk discipline¹¹, but commending its imagination.

The quote from Hudson (1966) raised the question of the relations between style of thought, style of research and style of writing. It is perhaps appropriate to end a thesis whose topic has been the social meanings inevitably imputed to stylistic variation in speech, with a metacomment on style in academic theses and publications.

Academic publications and theses are characteristically associated with an abstract, impersonal style, although this is slowly changing.¹² The "dry", impersonal style of most writing in the social and physical sciences has historical and rhetorical, but no necessary logical reasons. (Scientific writing has now been the subject of various stylistic analyses, e.g. Huddleston et al 1968.) There is no reason why the informality of style or presentation (discussed by Hudson) should be incompatible with say, close argument. But writers who reject a formal style feel, in general, obliged to account for it. Thus Bondi (quoted by Rosen 1967) writes of his book The Common Sense of Science,

"Science is not an impersonal construction . . . This book is not less scientific because its manner is personal".

At various points in the present study I have discussed colloquialisms, arguing that this is theoretically fruitful, since idioms concerning everyday language behaviour often indicate interesting

¹¹ It is in any case admitted that even phenomenological sociology is inevitably a folk discipline. See Filmer et al 1972.

¹² For example, papers on sociolinguistics now sometimes contain self-conscious jokes, e.g. A true and exact survey of talking black - ... "a garland of delights in which blacks themselves and white devils (including the author) discourse on a wide range of fascinating topics, some of them having to do with ethnographie of communication, discourse of talk about talk, . . . " etc. (Abrahams 1972).

features of language use (see e.g. 4.8). Berne (1964:63) goes further in pointing to the value of colloquialisms in getting across concepts in the area of interpersonal behaviour, arguing that they may be more precise ("hit the nail on the head") than "learned polysyllables". Perhaps the best-known user of colloquialisms in academic argument is Gellner (especially in Words and Things, 1959).

Mills (1959:239) commented long ago in general terms on the "socspeak" used by many social scientists. One of the more unfortunate ironies of much recent work on "everyday" routines by the ethnomethodologists, is that it is expressed in a language which no-one ever spoke in everyday life.¹³ It has become in fact relatively commonplace to comment on the ethnomethodologists' "elephantine formulations" (Gouldner 1970), or to accuse them of being "drunk on syntax" (Roshier 1972). Filmer et al (1972) in their survey of ethnomethodological approaches to sociology explicitly set out to remedy features of the styles of Garfinkel and his colleagues (see p.2). They do not discuss however whether this change in "style" also affects the "content" of the argument.

The most radical argument relating style of expression with theoretical validity is probably put forward by Popper who argues that knowledge advances when it becomes "objective" by being clearly formulated in writing, when it is therefore able to be criticised and is therefore open to refutation. He argues that it is the duty of

¹³ Goffman (*passim*), although not so extreme, also contrives to discuss the routines of everyday life in an abstract style overburdened with lengthy footnotes, but nevertheless combined with humorous anecdotes from unorthodox sources.

scholars to write as clearly as possible:

" . . . aiming at simplicity and lucidity is a moral duty of all intellectuals: lack of clarity is a sin . . . I believe that all appraisals of theories are appraisals of their critical discussion. I therefore believe that clarity is an intellectual value since, without it, critical discussion is impossible." (1972:44, 58, emphasis in original.)

I have argued throughout the present study that, given the primitive state of sociolinguistics, it is more important to discuss a relatively small amount of data, and to devote space to clarifying the status of the discussion. "Sociolinguistics", as I have emphasised (e.g. in 1.2) covers a wide range of research. In particular, it includes a wide range of description of different theoretical status, from abstract and elegant conceptual frameworks (e.g. Bernstein's latest work) to highly detailed commentary on fragments of audio-recorded conversation (e.g. Sacks' work). I have argued (in 1.6) that one valid aim for sociolinguistics is to combine systematic and precise statements with the presentation of a "recognisable reality".

This section has merely juxtaposed a few topics whose relations seem to be susceptible to interesting study. I have suggested that any research¹⁴, but particularly research in the social sciences, draws on an "imaginative background" and can only benefit from having this made explicit; that there are many quite specific parallels and common themes in recent literature and recent sociology, particularly in writing and research influenced by phenomenology; that "style" is not neutral, but conveys part of the "imaginative background"; and that "style" may even be a critical element in theory.

¹⁴ For analyses of how the natural sciences also depend on an un-explicated world-view and commonsense knowledge, and on how institutionalised science is inevitably a socially organised routine, see Kuhn 1962, Garfinkel 1967, Elliot 1974.

I have done no more in this concluding section, then, than briefly indicate an almost unexplored area in which "style", "theory" and "imaginative background" are inevitably interdependent; thereby making explicit however that the present study is itself inevitably produced and constrained by precisely the same aspects of language in use which it purports to analyse.

* * * * *

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Appendix A

Transcription Conventions

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Audio-tapes have been transcribed down to the level of words, repetitions and hesitation phenomena.

Capital letters are used only for "I", for proper names, and to indicate tonic syllables if required. No punctuation (e.g. ? or ,) is used. Words are written in full (e.g. mister Bolton), normally in standard orthography.

Conventions

Hesitation phenomena:

.	very short pause
-	pause of less than one second, one dash for each beat at the speed the speaker is speaking
(1) (7)	pauses of 1 and 7 seconds, etc.
ha::rvey	prolonged sound, in proportion to number of colons
()	untranscribable
(word)	transcription not certain
((laugh)) ((creek))	description of feature
<u>robin</u> lakoff	underlining indicates particularly stressed syllable
* or [overlaps: asterisk or bracket is at point where speaker cuts in; whichever is more convenient is used; i.e. these are equivalent:
	A: hi *did you
	B: hi
	A: hi [did you
	B: [hi
[]	extent of overlap

Appendix B

Transcript of a Whole Lesson

Transcript of a whole lesson

This appendix comprises a transcript of a tape-recording of one whole lesson of about 45 minutes in length. The transcript is coded according to the coding scheme proposed in chapter 6, but not otherwise commented upon, or referred to in the text (although a couple of the extracts used as examples in the text are taken from this recording). I present some of the data in this relatively "raw" form for several reasons.

First, in the study of verbal interaction, where there are no well-defined methods of data-collection and analysis, it is important to keep the reader clearly in view of what the data "look like". This can be achieved only partly by discussing in detail transcripts of exchanges of up to a few minutes in length, as I have done in the body of the study. Readers, used to seeing only representations of conversations in plays and novels, are often unfamiliar with the appearance of actual transcribed conversation. Teacher-pupil talk is typically highly ordered at this superficial level, and looks relatively like a playscript when compared with other less "formal" speech situations. (Contrast this transcript, for example, with the transcript of multi-party committee-talk in Stubbs 1973 in Appendix E.)

Second, the only way of demonstrating the generality and frequency of the kind of metacommunicative talk which I have discussed, is to show it recurring throughout a whole lesson. The frequency of such talk in this lesson can be easily checked by simply glancing at how much teacher-talk is coded, since, by definition, only talk with a metacommunicative function is coded.

Third, in this study I have proposed various methods of analysis without either applying the methods of analysis to large samples of data, or claiming to present a definitive analysis of any one piece of conversational data. Such data could be analysed in many different ways, if they were available in a suitable form to other researchers.

One final point: as I have emphasised throughout the

study, such a "coding" should be treated as illustrative, not definitive; such a coding by-passes precisely the problems which have been the main topic of chapters 7 to 9.

Lesson. 10 August 1972

MWS em - is it just about long enough (3) ((scraping of chair)) that should be ok (5)

((discussion with T about fixing microphone lead))

T this is about linguistic register then this lesson isn't it really

MWS yeah just about yeah - - that kind of thing (3) ok

T right (2) is it on this thing ((referring to tape-recorder))

MWS yeah (9) ((T coughs twice))

T now -

aa

as you can see this sheet says at the top the title - it says different language - for different . situations - -

t

ok - - ((rising intonation))

othu

now -

aa

if we read down the sheet a little bit and just see what this -- says (1)

it says if you're learning a foreign language - -

t

it's very very difficult - to know just how

you are going - - to speak in a given situation - -

for example - - s'pose you are - - coming out of

ex

school - two or three friends and you are chatting together - - then you will not be speaking -

together . in the same way - as you would be

speaking if earlier in the day you'd been - sent

to the headmaster's room for - breaking a window

or fighting another boy (2)

	the two ways you would be speaking would be very	
	very different - - -	s
	now can you think of some ways in which - taking	aa el
	these two situations . the way you spoke would be	
	different ((coughs)) (3)	
	imagine - coming out of school talking to friends -	
	on the one hand - and earlier in the day you've	
	been sent - to the headmaster . and you have had	
	to speak - to him (2) think of some differences	s
	between these two situations (5)	el
	not very difficult (5)	pr
	Olivier	el
PO	oh eh when we - speak to a headmaster we speak (9)	
T	yes . go on (7)	edt. pr
	go on . finish his sentence off somebody -	pr el/edlg
	when you're with the headmaster you would speak	
	very	edlg/clue
P?	(politely)	
T	Daniel	el
PD	politely	
T	yes	edt
	you would have to speak politely wouldn't you - -	
	you wouldn't sort of go in - to the headmaster's	
	room - - eh - and speak in the same way as you	
	would to your friends . you would have to be very	
	very polite (2)	edlg
	another thing (3)	el
	Richard	el

PR with your . with your friends with our friends eh
we speak we have the (same) thing as in as in the
headmaster

T yes . ed t
you'd be speaking about different . things - - ed lg
you were ((coughs))
for example if the headmaster m . and you might be ex
speaking about what - kind of a punishment to give
you if you had broken a window or something like
that - - whereas a . your fiwith your friends you would
not be discussing . one would not be saying - - how
(we) would be punishing the other obviously - - -
so you would be speaking about different subjects - s
o . yes . obviously - -
you would be speaking to the headmaster politely (3)
how else might you be speaking - to the headmaster elcl
(6) because you could you would be speaking - you
would could speak politely to your friends couldn't clue
you (4)
Olivier el
PO we speak eh - seriously with headmaster - we don't
with our friends we speak in the ()
T yes with the headmaster you ((clears throat)) you'd edt/edlg
have to be - - quite serious - - but whe . if you
were talking with your friends you could be going
- home after school - telling jokes - - making each
other laugh (2)
so there again that is a difference - - - s
come on let's think of some more differences .
Colin (11) el

	Richard	el
PR	with your with our friends we must eh - show that we	
	are not babies - we must be eh - - - (if you	
	understand) we must be strong together - ()	
	but with the headmaster we are small (behind) him	
T	yes he is . a person who is much more . important than	edt/edlg
	you -	
	and so with him - - - you will have to speak - with -	s
	respect this is the word I wanted - to come out	n
	earlier but it didn't - you have to speak respectfully	edlg
	to a headmaster - - - but - with your . friends - -	
	you are all the same - and you don't - feel . that	
	one is more important than the other - and so as you	edlg/s
	say you can be - - eh - - strong together in the	
	conversation you don't have to feel - - - uneasy	
	about what to say next whereas if you were in the	
	headmaster's room - - you'd probably be a little	
	afraid if you'd done something quite serious - and	
	had to go and see a headmaster - - - you would be	
	afraid - obviously - - - but obviously when you are	
	speaking to your friends you are not afraid (2)	
	all right then so we've got quite a few - - -	aa
	differences . out of that - - -	s
	and - I hope you'll remember something about that	aa
	(2) now let's take another man - - in a different	aa t
	situation - - - think of a business man -	
	a man who works in the office -	cl
	somebody who's quite important (2)	cl

he has dealings obviously with many different people

(4) he has his colleagues on the staff of the firm

- who are - just as important as him - -

in the same way as you have your friends . they would s

be his friends wouldn't they - - - he has - - probably

got . a wife (3) probably some children (3) probably

he's got a secretary - - and perhaps many . people

in the firm - over whom . he is the boss (3)

and so when he is speaking to each of these different s

people - - - he will speak to them - differently

- - -

for example he won't . speak to his wife - - as if

she were - - - the lady who comes in in the mornings

to bring him his tea from the kitchens at the . in

the firm would he - - - he wouldn't speak to his

wife - - eh like that - - - he wouldn't speak to

his colleagues in the same way that he would speak

to his wife (5)

and so you see that when you learn a foreign language s

- - you have the difficulty of knowing - - how you

ought to speak - in different - situations -

because each situation requires - a different . kind

- - of method of approach . in speaking (3)

all right ((rising intonation)) othu

now (2) aa

Can any of you - think then . of different - - -

situations - and - tell me a few . things about how el

- you would be speaking in that situation (11)

you see in france probably you have () many	clue
very different - situations in a day - - -	
obviously - and in each one although perhaps you	
don't realise it you are not - speaking in the	
same - way - -	
so - think of some situations and then think a little	S
bit about how - you would be speaking in that	el
situation	
(4) who's going to start (4)	el
I sabelle what can you think of (12)	el
all right I sabelle	aa
hands down a moment	rej
.Isabelle - -	aa
s'pose you are speaking to your mother - - -	t
right ((rising intonation)) - - -	othu
now how would that be different to the way for	aa
example you would speak - to a teacher - - in your	
school (8)	el
how would it be different (6)	pr
first of all think about the relationship - - - in	clue
each situation -	
Isabelle (4)	pr
between you and your mother - what kind of a	
relationship is there (9)	el
see - - d'you understand -	othu
you feel - different things about your mother - -	
than you'd feel - about a teacher - - - don't you	clue
- - - do you or don't you Isabelle - -	pr
for example do you <u>love</u> your teacher - - -	clue

I think probably not - - - you may like the person
 you may have - - a lot of eh r ((coughs)) - - a
 lot of eh liking for the person - but it is not
 the same kind as you have for your mother - - cl
 d'you see - - othu
 so you will be speaking to your mother - - - with s
love - - each will understand the other - -
 whereas with a teacher you will be polite - -
 you will be - - respectful - there will be some
 things you feel unable to say - to the teacher -
 whereas with your mother - - you will have - a
 great confidence . in your mother you will be able -
 to say - whatever you feel like saying - -
 ok ((rising intonation)) othu
 Richard what were you going to say now el
 PR eh the man who is with us who speak - it's about eh
 - business - and this is this is why it's about
 something more personal
 T yes (2) good edt
 PR I don't think that the man is going to speak to -
 how - to his wife about his work eh - - if it's
 difficult
 T no . he will be speaking more personally you see edt
 PR yes
 T about . about eh family matters . for example ex
 PR yes or what can can we do - - - in the on monday
 T mm what can we do on monday evening you see . can ac/edlg
 eh you know - are we going to invite soandso round
 for dinner whereas at work - he would not be speaking
 obviously about his family - -

	now can we create some new situations now -	aa/t
	we've looked at the pupil relationship to a teacher	
	or to a headmaster - and your (re) relationships -	s
	your situations as friends - can we create now some	
	new situations (17)	el
	yes Olivier	el
PO	when we eh when we are children we speak to our	
	parents and then we speak to our small brother - or	
	small sis or small sister - - there is - there are	
	differences	
T	yes - - what kind of difference	edt/elcl
PO	eh with a small brother or a small sister we are eh	
	more eh (9)	
T	go on - - - what kind of things would you be talking	pr/clue
	about to your brother (7)	
	probably about . you know what you are go what you	
	are going to play after breakfast and things like	
	this	
PO?	yes eh	
T	whereas with your mother you might be saying mother	
	- can I have more pocket money - *to spend	
PO?	yes	
T	or something like this (6)	
	right look at -	aa
	Richard what were you going to say first - and then	el
	we'll go on down this sheet	
PR	another situation - a captain who speak - who speaks	
	- eh - to eh to his soldiers - and eh a captain who	
	speaks to the man which who is under him	

T	mm - yes - good - - -	edt
	so let's have a look then on this sheet at some of the different expressions for different - speech situations (3)	t/n
	so here we have some different - expressions - - for different - situations that we come across (3)	s/n
	chatting to friends - -	n/t
	well we've already discussed that one - - -	
	would be - - - be joking - be laughing together -	
	be very friendly disc eh - discussion together (3)	
	making a speech (4)	n/t
	you see ((very soft)) (2)	othu
	when you're making when you make a speech - it's not really a conversation is it - -	
	eh - a speech - is something far more formal - -	
	you see it's something which one person - says . to other people (3)	cl
	and so . this again is very very different isn't it -	s
	to chatting to your friends . or chatting to your parents and things - - -	
	gossiping (3)	n/t
	now in english - - - if we say gossiping . sometimes	n
	- - we - - - we mean something which is a little bit - - - not very nice somehow you know you . you	
	- hear a very - you know a lady perhaps in a street going - - going down the street a few doors and saying . oh . d'you know - that lady next door to me -	
	she's so terrible . she left <u>all</u> her milkbottles outside yesterday and - she never opens her curtains and - the house is absolutely dirty and the windows	

	she has never - washed the windows for six months -	
	this kind of thing we call we - call gossiping - -	n
	sometimes we don't like - gossiping - - -	
	but again you know we can say - that gossiping - - -	n
	is something good -	
	something similar to chatting to friends - -	
	sometimes it has this other - aspect to it (3)	
	having (an) argument (4)	n/t
	now how does this differ from chatting to your friends	aa el
	- - you leave school chatting to your friends - - -	
	and with the same friends later you are having a	
	quarrel . or an argument - - what has changed - -	el/cl
	what makes the situation different - -	
	Colin	el
PC	instead of laughing and having fun - you'd be shouting	
	at him - - and pushing him around	
T	yes . you'd be shouting and - pushing around	edt /edlg
	go on - did you say something else	pr
PC	disagreeing	
T	disagreeing	ac
	Daniel what were you going to say	el
PD	()	
T	the same ((rising intonation))	
	so really the atmosphere would have changed and	s
	instead of being friendly - something has happened to	
	make someone . in the group 3 angry - - -	
	and so . you will stop being polite - -	
	you may begin to - lose control of what you're	
	saying you may begin to shout (4)	

	now this one . next one - talking shop - - -	aa n/t
	who doesn't understand what that means - - - doesn't	othu/n
	- - what does it mean then	n/el
PO?	it is eh - - talk of - things not serious	
T	things	ownu
PO	not serious	
T	things you sell - - oh no - - not at all (4)	edt
	who does think they know what it means (16)	othu/n
	well it means quite simply talking about your business	
	. all the time -	n
	s'pose I am a man who sells - - tape recorders or	ex
	something I would be - - talking shop -	
	if I alw always - talking about different kinds of	
	tape recorders how they worked - and things like	
	this - or . at a party you know beginning to talk	
	about business - - this kind of thing -	
	that is talking shop -	n
	talking all the time . really about - your business - -	
	now the next one look at the next one - - -	aa t
	this again is a totally different situation - - -	
	to when if you're talking to your friends for	
	example - - - although this may happen between	
	friends I don't know - - to chat someone up (3)	n/t
	I think this can have two - - - connotations - - -	
	really -	n
	I think it can mean when you're speaking . to someone	n
	- because you want something - very much (3)	
	you . you know you s - if you want some more pocket	
	money you - - talk you say to your mother oh -	

you know I've been a good boy this week and you try
 and - you're very very sweet - and nice to your
 mother so that she will say all right - you can have -
 three or four francs more or whatever it is a week
 - - - or - the other aspect in english - - which you
 are a little young - for - I think is if you are in
 the street for example you're walking down the
 street - and all of a sudden you see the most
 beautiful girl in the world - - you see and you want
 - - this girl to be your own girl and you want to to
 out with her for ever and ever and - you want to fall
 in love with her and all this kind of rubbish - - -
 you see you will begin to be ever so sweet to this
 girl you see and you will begin to talk to her -
 and try and get her - into conversation with you (3)
 and of course you will not be talking in the same way
 - to this girl - in that situation - as you'd be
 talking say among yourselves - - as you leave the
 school (3)

now is it becoming clearer to you that in different
 situations - the way you speak - would be different
 - - is it becoming clear this

aa othu/s

P?

yes

othu

T

yes ((rising intonation)) - - -

othu

a school lesson for example - next one (3)

t/ex

between the teacher and (their) and the pupils

there is - - - a certain eh - relationship he has

to teach you - but - - the relationship is not very

deep - in some cases in some cases it is - - -

and . so here again you will have a different - -
 way of approach - - a teacher will not teach a
 lesson in the same way - as you would talk to your
 friends about your latest hobby - or your new
 girlfriend or something like that

(4) in an interview - - -

you're very formal with the person - - -

often you don't know you've never met before - -

and so you are not talking in a in a way which is .
 intimate at all (5)

look down the other side now (3)

lecturing (3)

what is a lecture (6)

what is a lecture ((softer)) (4)

Colin

PC it's - a kind of a lesson - where you've got a
 professor or somebody important - teaching you -
 about - - - science or geography or something like
 that

T well about any subject really

it's when one person - takes a lesson - - and where
 he speaks - all the time . you see - it's really

like making a speech - - - you see in the university cl

you have teaching by lectures - you come in and you

- - teacher comes in and s . starts to speak - and .

you make notes about what he says he says at the end

good morning and goes out - - - often - - - there's

little . opportunity for discussion - in a lecture

- - -

s

t

t

t

n/el

n/el

el

edt

cl

	giving a <u>sermon</u> - - - giving a <u>sports</u> commentary - -	t
	what would be different there - -	el
	what would be some of the main differences between	
	giving a sermon - - - and giving a sports commentary	el
	- - - one very very obvious one (3)	clue
	so obvious you're probably not thinking about it (5)	clue
	Richard	el
PR	eh what is mean - giving a sermon (4)	(P)ownu
T	well . on sundays - you go to mass - don't you - - -	
	some of you - - - and during the service - -	
	there is a part when the priest - - speaks to the	
	whole - congregation in the churce - - for about ten	
	minutes about a subject that he chooses - -	
	yes ((rising intonation)) (3)	othu
	this is called . a sermon (4)	n
	it is . when a priest speaks to the whole lot of	
	people who is . who are in - his church - -	
	so what would be the difference - there - between	
	say a priest speaking to - the whole of his church	
	- and somebody giving a commentary . on a football	
	match (6)	el
	come on I mean it's - not very difficult - -	pr
	Daniel	
PD	there is perhaps more enthusiasm in the sports -	
	than in the sermon	
T	perhaps could be - - although I don't know - -	edt
	I think it's probable that - there is a lot of	
	enthusiasm definitely in a sports commentary - -	
	why (11)	elcl

	why is why has . a sports commentator got to be	
	enthusiastic during a football match (7)	el
	quite an obvious reason really - - -	clue
	Richard	el
PR	it's to be interesting - for to interest somebody	
T	yes it has to be interesting but also a sermon has to	edt /edlg
	be interesting	
PR	yes but it's not for the - same kind of eh person	
	because -- generally I think that eh -- eh a sports	
T	yes	edt
PR	commen commentary it's at the tv	
T	yes	edt
PR	and it's for a lot of people	
T	yes	edt
PR	perhaps only ()	
T	yes very good	edt
PR	and at church there is only - - a group of people	
T	yes	edt
PR	and they are here to - in the church to - to think-	
	but eh for a football match (it's not) to think -	
	it's to see to imagine what's happening	
T	yes - you still haven't answered the question though	edt
	. really	
PR	in a football match you are two - (two groups) two	
	teams which are together for a game to make a	
	football match and someone is for the team a - and	
	some others for the team b - and there is a ()	
T	yes	edt
PR	(I know that b is) and ()	
	I don't know they are the best	

T	yes . good	edt
PR	instead of the church - - - they (explain) something	
T	mm - good -	edt
	so in a football match then a commentator is very	s
	very enthusiastic - and - as you say . interesting	
	a very large - number - of people - - -	
	now - the priest will be talking . to the members of	aa
	his church - very differently than a sports	
	commentator would be speaking - to . the people who	
	were listening - much - quicker for example - because	
	in a football match the ball moves all the time and	
	there is no time for the commentator - to rest really	
	because something is happening bang bang bang all	
	through the game (3)	
	yes Colin	el
PC	()	
T	pardon	own u
PC	() just said what ()	
T	Daniel what were you going to say	el
PD	() a football commentary is easier to understand than a sermon	
T	good - -	edt
	and also the purpose is very different - - -	
	the sports commentator wants to tell his audience	
	what is happening - at the match - whereas the priest	
	giving a sermon - is trying . to change . people's	
	lives - he is trying to . make them better people - -	
	the sports commentator has - - no idea of this at all	
	in his mind (3)	

	telling someone off (2)	t/n
	what does this mean - what is that (4)	n/el
	then think about some of the ways you would do it	clue
P	there is a relationship between telling someone off and putting someone off ()	
T	no - - - no (8)	edt
	tell someone off - - -	n
	you ought to know what this means Renaud after your day the other day (3)	n el
	s'pose you do something wrong - - what happens to you (4)	clue
PR?	something not very pleasant	
T	something not very pleasant yes a telling . when someone tells you off it's not very pleasant - - - what - does it mean then - telling off	edlg/edt edlg n
P	() (6)	
T	you do something wrong. I come in . I see what you've done - I find you - - and - I am angry with you - and . I . tell you off - I rebuke you (4) do you understand	n othu
P	what is * ()	
T	I speak to you about what you've done wrong I say . what have you done there eh why have you done this thing - - mm - I am angry . and I tell you off	n
PR	I think eh to tell off it's to say something - eh to someone and for eh () someone don't do these things again	
T	yes good (3) so how would you go about telling someone off (4) you'd speak in a very different way to if you were speaking to your friends - - probably (3)	edt el

		18.
	how would you speak - - -	el
	Daniel	el
PD	you speak eh - nearly as a sermon for a sermon	
T	mm ((rising intonation))	ownu
PD	it's nearly the same as a sermon	
T	(for a) . nearly the same as a sermon	edlg
PD	yes	
T	why	elcl
PD	because at the sermon the priest () ((pronounced [praist]))	
T	the priest ((corrects pronunciation))	edlg
PD	the priest want to eh - - - persuade you not	
T	yes	edt
PD	to do something () and when we eh - tell someone off - we try to persuade him () not to do it again yes good -	edlg/edt
	but how would you be speaking - to a person you were telling off - Renaud -	el
	about time I heard your voice this morning - - -	pr
	so wake up -	pr
	it's not very difficult Renaud this - - -	pr
	for even you - -	pr
	come on . Renaud - -	pr
	show some sparks of life (4)	pr
	s'pose I am telling you off - how would I be speaking to you (5)	el

	do you understand . or have you been lost by the	othu
	wayside somewhere - -	
	do you understand - what I am saying -	othu
	well then come on (7)	pr
	we're all waiting Renaud (2)	pr
	it's not very difficult this (5)	pr
	well for example would I be speaking to you very very	
	sweetly - - if I were telling you off - -	ex/clue
	in a very very friendly way (4)	cl
	what - pardon - -	ownu
PR	no	
T	well speak up - don't speak to your hand	edlg
	your hand is not very interested in this - - we are - -	edlg
	again	pr
PR	no	
T	no well how would I be speaking then (7)	elcl
	how would I be speaking - if I were telling you off (4)	
	which I'm going to do in about two minutes if you	
	don't wake up - - -	pr
	all right Richard	el
PR	eh first when you are (telling) someone off you are	
	angry	
T	to <u>tell</u> someone off	clg
PR	to tell someone off you are angry	
T	angry right good . ok stop -	edt rej
	Isabelle- -	aa
	how do you speak to someone if you are angry (4)	el
	do you understand angry	othu
PI	yes	

T	how would you speak to someone if you were angry (7)	el
	s'pose you find that your little brother or something	ex
	has broken - the doll - you loved the very best . of	
	all your dolls - - how would you speak to your little	
	brother in that situation - - - Isabelle (7)	el
	oh come on (8)	pr
	Renaud - - -	el
	we've said you're angry - - -	s
	yes ((rising intonation))	othu
	right *	aa
	how do you speak to someone if you're angry (9)	
	come Isabelle or Renaud (7)	el
	it's not very difficult this you know (3)	pr
	have you ever been angry - Isabelle -	el
	have you ever . been . angry with someone (5)	othu/el
	((repeated more distinctly))	
	Isabelle .	pr
	have you . ever . in your life been - angry - - -	
	no . or yes (10)	pr
	do you not know . whether you have been angry (5)	pr
	Renaud have you ever been angry - - -	el
	come on don't whisper (2) how can I hear you if you	edlg/pr
	whisper -	
	come on have you ever been angry -	pr
	Renaud - - -	pr
	Olivier	el
T	yes I eh	
T	yes well how do you speak to someone if you're <u>angry</u>	
PO	eh I cry at eh my sister if	
T	you . you . again	el
P	I eh	

T	you shout	clg
PO	eh	
T	yes not cry	clg
PO	I shout after my sister if eh if she has broken eh - my - - I don't know	
T	yes . if she's broken - something you like - -	edt
	you shout - ok	edt
PO	yes	
T	what else	el cl
PO	eh	
T	Richard	el
PR	you lose the control of what you say	
T	yes . good .	edt
	you shout - you lose control of what you say Daniel	edt el
PD	you promise her a big punishment	
T	yes . you promise people a punishment - -	edlg
	anything else (3) anything else you want to add	
	Colin (6)	el
PC	make sure that you get (it into her)	
T	yes you would be very <u>insistent</u> - -	edt clg
	you would make sure that the person has understood	
	what you say (6)	
	good (3)	edt
	cross examining a witness (3)	t/n
	now I'm <u>sure</u> you don't understand what that means	
	some of you - - -	othu
	so Colin is going to explain	el cl
PC	if you cross examine a witness - - you speak fast	
	so that he'll put in words that they didn't mean to	
	say	

T	(but) first of all what is a witness - -	n/elcl
	and what situation is it in	elcl
PC	it's em . sometimes there's an accident - when .	
	someone sees (something) { and you want that person	
T	mm	
PC	to come up to the judge	
T	yes	edt
PC	to court - - and to say exactly what they (seen)	
	saw	
T	mm	ac
PC	(and () them that if you come along and cross	
	examine them - - - you would eh - - - well quickly	
	say different things which might have nothing to do	
	with it - - so if he says - my friend told me -	
	you'd find out whether he was really there - or if	
	somebody told him to () and so you'd get (the	
	whole truth)	
T	so the situation then is in a courtroom - -	s
	right.	
	there is someone . there - to give evidence - -	
	allright ((rising intonation)) -	othu
	and they are being asked . questions (4)	
	and - - - they are trying to prove whether someone who	
	is there is guilty - - or whether innocent - -	
	whether he has done . the crime - or whether - he	
	has not - - -	
	and - the cross examination - takes place the second	
	((sic)) - - someone asks him some questions - -	
	s'pose the man . who is trying to prove - that the	ex
	other didn't do the crime -	
	right -	othu

so he . he asks some questions -

right -

othu

now after - - the one who is trying to prove - that

the . the man did do it - - - asks some other questions

- and he tries very very hard - to be very very .

sssscheming - - - to try and give - the man who is asking

the questions . ideas that perhaps he didn't have

before - so that he will say little things - - which

will help to lead - to the man - being - proclaimed .

guilty - - - so in a cross examination - - - it is

very firm . for one thing - it's very persistent - - -

it's very very . difficult - for the person - who is

answering the questions - - -

ok - the one who's asking the questions is asking

othu

them - with some definite . aim . in mind - - -

s

ok

aa

so we've looked then this morning at these - different

w ways - really that you will speak . to different

s

people - - -

in a similar way - - don't forget that you can have

one subject (3) which will be talked about in

different ways - depending on which people - are there

(4) for example s'pose you are talking - - - about - - ex

a play you have seen in the theatre (5)

before you saw a play you may have heard a lecture

about the play (4) you may . have - - discussed - the

play - afterwards with some of the actors - - - you

may have . done an interview - - with the person who

produced it - - - who . you know who directed . the -

acting - -

you may have - come to an argument between your friends

about it - - -

and so one subject can be talked about - - in many
different ways- -

so two things to remember this morning - -

first . when you learn english - -

you must be - always - thinking in the back of your
mind - that you will have to use your english - -

differently when you speak to different . people (3)

ok ((rising intonation))

and you have to be ready - to . adapt your english .
to suit - different - situations (4)

all right ((rising intonation)) - - -

so have you understood the lesson . who has not
understood (4)

(may) have to back over some of this tomorrow if
someone hasn't understood - - - all clear was it (6)

ok then - -

what time does the lesson end this mor what time did
we begin

PC ten forty five

T all right then so . this is really the end - of . the
lesson - - -

now . tomorrow . I don't know if we'll be having a
lesson probably we will - and if we have a lesson
tomorrow then - - we shall be doing pronunciation
. of the letter r (3) which you may find . a little
difficult - because it's not the same - as in - -
french - -

so . leave your lesson books on the desks and I'll
put them away when you've gone -

s

s

othu

othu

othu

othu

t

t

thank you for coming and . go and , have your break
now (5)

((pupils leave))

Appendix C

"Keeping in touch: some functions of teacher-talk",
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OCCASIONAL PAPER

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KEEPING IN TOUCH - SOME FUNCTIONS OF TEACHER-TALK

by

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SUMMARY

This paper has been prepared as a contribution to a forthcoming book on classroom observation, and is written specifically for a non-specialist audience.

The paper discusses the kind of description which is needed to account for the complexity of speech behaviour in the classroom. It begins by explaining various concepts which have become almost traditional in sociolinguistics and microsociology. It goes on to propose the concepts of 'monitoring' and 'metacommunication' to bring together some of the most striking features of teacher-style: namely, the ways in which teachers exercise control over the progress of the talk itself in the classroom, by continually explaining, correcting, evaluating, editing and summarizing.

It is argued that such concepts increase our power to account for the way in which teachers typically talk to pupils in the classroom; and also that focussing on specific interactions between speakers - that have been observed and recorded in a specific context like the classroom - will advance sociolinguistic theory.

Teachers have to devote a great deal of time and effort to simply keeping in touch with their pupils - not only because of the far from ideal communication conditions in the average school classroom, but also because of the very nature of teaching. They have to attract and hold their pupils' attention, get them to speak or be quiet, to be more precise in what they say or write, and to try and keep some check on whether at least most of the pupils follow what is going on.

At the start of one English class which I observed, the teacher, after talking quietly to some pupils at the front of the room, turned and said to the whole class:

"Right! Fags out please!"¹

No pupils were smoking. So the teacher did not mean his words to be taken literally. His remark had the primary function of attracting the pupils' attention, of warning them of messages still to come - in short, of opening the communication channels. The remark had a 'contact' function² of putting the teacher in touch with the pupils.

The problems of analysing language-use of this kind are not trivial, and yet they have not received much detailed consideration by linguists. For example, how did the pupils know that the teacher did 'not really mean' that they had to extinguish their non-existent cigarettes? What shared knowledge and expectations concerning appropriate speech behaviour did they draw on, in order to successfully interpret what the teacher actually meant?³

In this paper, I begin by discussing various concepts which can begin to answer these questions. I then take these concepts as a basis for isolating the particularly striking 'contact' features of teacher-talk. The general concepts are therefore introduced in order to show how teaching can be considered as a particular kind of speech event, and thus constantly compared with other situations in which people speak to each other. The concepts

and descriptive framework are illustrated by samples of teacher-pupil interaction collected by tape-recording and by taking field notes during periods of classroom observation.

(I hope, incidentally, that the title of this paper and these opening paragraphs have themselves performed a 'contact' function of preparing the reader for what I want to talk about, and hence of putting us both on the same wavelength.)

Language variation

'Sociolinguistics' covers a wide range of studies of how language is used in its social contexts. But all the studies have one thing in common - they deal with language variation. They emphasise how malleable language is, and how its form and function change across different cultures and across different social situations within one culture. The aim is, of course, to find systematic patterning within the variation.

Various social factors determine the individual speaker's use of language. Everyone is multidialectal or multistylistic, in the sense that he adapts his style of speaking to suit the social situation in which he finds himself. Such style-shifting demands constant judgements. Yet speakers are not normally conscious of making such judgements until they find themselves in a problematic situation for which they do not know the conventions, or for which the criteria for speaking in a certain way clash. On the other hand, it is intuitively clear that a teacher, for example, does not speak in the same way to his wife, his mother-in-law, his colleagues in the staff room, his headmaster, a student teacher, or his pupils. His way of talking to his pupils will also change according to the matter in hand - teaching an academic subject, organising the school concert, or handing out punishments. People

therefore adapt their speech according to the person they are talking to, and the point behind the talk. These are social, rather than purely linguistic restraints.

As further examples of what I have in mind by talking about language variation, consider the following rather mixed bag of 'styles' or varieties'⁴ of spoken and written English: BBC English, Black English, Brooklynese, Cockney, officialese, journalese, lecturing, church sermon, talking shop, talking lah-de-dah, talking down to someone, chatting someone up, giving someone the lowdown, giving someone a dressing down, getting something off one's chest, small chat, hippie talk, men's talk, women's talk, a heart-to-heart talk, whispering sweet nothings ... These language varieties vary along several dimensions, notably geographical, social class, and functional. But their description involves questions of the same order: namely, who says what to whom? where? when? why? how?⁵ In addition, more than one dimension is typically involved in any one of the varieties mentioned. For example, BBC English has not only geographical and social class implications, but also shows functional specialisation.

Some of the categories I have listed as language varieties might be thought of as speech situations, rather than styles or varieties. But speech and social situation are not really separable in this way. It is not simply the case that certain social situations demand, or make it appropriate that one whisper sweet nothings; by whispering sweet nothings, the speaker may build up specific expectations in his audience and therefore create a specific social situation! Speech is therefore not just something that happens in situations - a sort of epiphenomenon. It is part of situations. To say, therefore, as I began by saying above, that certain situations 'determine' certain kinds of language-use, is to oversimplify. It is, rather a two-way process. I will show below how the characteristic 'contact' language of teachers creates, and is created by, a specific social situation in the classroom.

Native speakers of a language therefore command a great deal of judgemental skill at variety-shifting to suit the occasion. Linguists have recently paid a lot of attention to the competence which native speakers of a language possess to distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sentences. But a native speaker has internalised a great deal of other knowledge about his language, including: whether language he hears is appropriate to the situation in which it is uttered; and how to use his knowledge about social relationships in interpreting what other speakers say. In this paper, I am particularly concerned with these two aspects of communicative competence in the context of the classroom.

Language functions

One way of analysing speech behaviour which has become fairly traditional over the last ten years or so, is to isolate various factors in the social situation which influence or interact with the kind of language used, and to discuss associated functions which language fills in different situations.⁶

Language does not play a constant role across different social situations - it is revealing to consider how unimportant language may be in certain contexts! Yet many people still assume that language has at most two general functions of referring to the external world and communicating explicit messages (a referential-cognitive function) and of expressing feelings (an emotive function). This distinction may hold as an initial classification, but it is quite inadequate as a detailed analysis. It is now something of a commonplace in sociolinguistics, that language can have many functions.

For example, in a lecture or a Third Programme talk - or in this paper - language may have as its primary function the task of getting a message across, and of persuading the addressee of some point of view. But cocktail

party chat, talk about the weather, reminiscing about old friends, a headmaster's address to the school, or even pupils' avid discussion of last night's football match, may have the primary function of establishing or maintaining social relationships and solidarity - very little new information may be communicated. Other functions of language include: organising social effort; reliving experiences; releasing tension or 'getting something off one's chest'; crystallising ideas or 'putting things in a nutshell'; remembering things - a mnemonic function; measuring time; or simply filling embarrassing silences.

In the same way, brief utterances within longer stretches of discourse may also have different primary functions. It is important to realise that the function of an utterance may be quite distinct from its traditional grammatical description. For example, a teacher may say:

"Come down to the front."

This is a clear imperative. But he may also say:

"Stevie, I don't think it's a good idea for you to sit beside anybody else, do you?"

Although not in the form of an 'imperative' sentence, this remark has the clear function of getting the pupil to move.

The main purpose of the rest of the paper will be to draw out some of the social messages underlying the literal meaning of teachers' words.

The problem of perception

Isolating language functions in this way begins to provide a method of investigating the complexity of language-use. There are two distinct problems in research into social interaction: one is to see what is going on; the other is to find a way of describing it.

Much writing on 'social behaviour' or 'inter-personal interaction' expresses an almost primitive awe in the face of its complexity or 'richness'. Researchers have shown many details in the patterned routines or conventions which shape our communicative behaviour at many levels: linguistic, paralinguistic (intonation, accent, etc.), kinesic (body motion), gestural, proxemic (body position), and so on, but without bringing out the functions of the different means of communication found. A commonly expressed overall conclusion is that in human communicative behaviour, 'nothing never happens' or that 'anything anyone ever says is true'.⁷ Such paradoxical statements reveal disquieting truths. A teacher inevitably communicates something to his pupils the moment he walks into the classroom - by his style of speech, his accent, his tone of voice, his gestures, his facial expression, and by whether he sits stolidly behind his desk or walks up the passage and puts his arm round a pupil's shoulder. Members of a society do interpretive work on the smallest and most fleeting fragments of behaviour.

But in another sense, such paradoxical statements are unhelpful. There is no direct way to investigate such complexity of behaviour. If a researcher wants a fruitful strategy, it does not help to simply emphasise how skillfully we all manipulate and interpret information coming and going simultaneously on many channels. Too much happens too fast in the classroom for the researcher to take account of it and describe it directly.

The linguist-researcher has been a pupil at school, if not a teacher - he has been a native member of the society whose behaviour he is trying to describe. But as such, he preinterprets the behaviour just as other native members do. He 'understands' what he sees, even before he has a chance to record it. On the other hand, there is no reason why the linguist-researcher should be afraid to use his intuitive knowledge of the system of

communicative behaviour in order to work out its structure. Indeed, there is, in principle, no way of inducing the systematic significance of fragments of behaviour, without making use of the tacit knowledge of the system held by a native or near native member. It would be impossible to set up an automatic procedure which would allow one to induce the rules for appropriate speech behaviour in a given speech community, without the privileged access to the meaning of the speech, held only by someone with intuitive knowledge of the system.⁸

The 'seen but unnoticed'⁹ expectancies which govern the smooth on-going of verbal interaction are even more difficult to make visible in their relevant details than the other taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life in society. Language is even closer to us than other social routines, implicated as it is in the development of our cognitive and self-regulative processes, as well as being part and parcel of our everyday social interaction. The researcher therefore needs some estrangement device¹⁰ to enable him to step back and observe what is going on in situations of face-to-face verbal communication. It is all too easy to record data on speech behaviour - all one needs is a tape-recorder. But such data are, too rich to be useful, unless one has also a way of focussing on the features of communication which are relevant. An indiscriminating gaze down the microscope will generally tell the researcher nothing. What events reveal depends on the nature of our questions.

One way of breaching the researcher's expectancies is to have him concentrate on the causes, forms and effects of miscommunication. Rather than attempt to capture directly how people communicate, the researcher can concentrate on the problematic aspects of communication situations - points, for example, at which the communication typically breaks down or encounters difficulties. By looking at what happens when people fail to get the message

across, at why this happens, and at what speakers do in order to reinstate the normal smooth flow of interaction, one can gain insight into the routine structures of behaviour. Some researchers would go as far as to deliberately bewilder people by disrupting the routine structure of interaction, in order to study the manoeuvres they adopt to restore the balance.¹¹ But one need not go as far as this. Linguists are familiar with the idea that characteristic malfunctions of a system indicate how the system normally functions. This is one reason why linguists have devoted much effort to looking at children's language acquisition, at speech defects, slips of the tongue, and various forms of speech pathology, such as aphasia.¹²

Even in everyday conversation, moments of miscommunication arise more frequently than is often realised. But there is a general rule in our society that demands that interaction proceed at a smooth flow: silences are often considered embarrassing, and disagreements must normally be mitigated. So speakers immediately counteract departures from the smooth on-going of normal face-to-face interaction by making (if necessary violent) attempts to restore the 'ritual equilibrium'.¹³ Normally, vigorous attempts are not necessary, since a constantly self-regulating mechanism generally operates during situations of talk - a delicately set thermostat which keeps the communication system simmering at the desired temperature. 'Gaffes', 'faux pas' and 'qui proquos' are only allowed to run their disastrous or farcical course on the stage. Participants in a conversation or discussion typically combine to minimise misunderstandings as soon as they appear on the horizon, by constantly monitoring their own language, reading between the lines of other speakers' speech, and by keeping an eye on the system itself. But think of common expressions in English to do with communication going wrong, and of people failing to pick up communicative cues: 'a nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse', 'he doesn't know when he's not wanted', 'he didn't

get the message', and 'he can't take a hint'. All these idioms point to the need to do constant interpretive work on the attitudes underlying the overt message - the need to continually 'read between the lines'.

But these systems-management mechanisms are brought into action so fast that they are not easily visible except in problematic situations which force the speakers to take more explicit and vigorous correcting manoeuvres than usual. Examples of problematic situations which reveal more clearly the kind of strategy which speakers have for keeping in touch with each other include: talking to a blind person, or talking to someone on the telephone (no visual feedback); communicating with a deaf person; situations of cross-cultural communication; most situations of making contact with someone for the first time; and teaching.

I am suggesting therefore that it is a fruitful research strategy to look at ways in which speakers compensate for difficulties inherent in the communication system. For people in social situations have not only ways of maintaining equilibrium, they also have systematic ways of dealing with problematic situations when they arise.

What kind of instructions are available to speakers who find themselves in problematic situations? What kind of competence can be imputed to them? What are the limits on this kind of ability? How do teachers compensate for the particularly bad communication conditions which obtain in the typical classroom? What kinds of sociolinguistic skills are peculiar to teaching? At what points will the teacher's strategies typically fail?

Keeping in touch with pupils

One social situation in which at least one of the participants takes particularly active steps to monitor the communication system, is the teaching situation.

Such monitoring may actually comprise 'teaching', or at least a major part of it. Teachers constantly check up to see if they are on the same wavelength as their pupils, if at least most of their pupils are following what they are saying, in addition to actively monitoring, editing and correcting the actual language which pupils use. Teachers therefore constantly exert different kinds of control over the on-going state of talk in the classroom.

I will refer to this communication about whether messages have been received and understood, and about whether speaker and hearer are in contact, as 'meta-communication' - it is communication about communication.¹⁴ Paradigm examples of utterances with a pure metacommunicational function of checking and oiling the communication channels themselves, are found in situations in which speakers cannot see each other and therefore have no normal visual feedback. Typical (hypothetical) examples are:

'Hello! Can you hear me? Oh, you're still there. I thought you'd hung up.'

'Come in Z-Victor-One! Do you read me?'

'Roger! Over and out!'

These examples refer to the physical communicational channels, in this instance, telephone and radio. But in addition, many metacommunicational metaphors in use in everyday English, refer to checks that the meaning of a message has been correctly conveyed: 'I couldn't get through to him', 'I managed to get the idea across', 'Do you follow me?', 'We don't seem to be on the same wavelength', 'I'm sure he didn't mean what he said', or 'He never says what he means'. It is often useful to look at common idioms connected with speech and communication. In this case they illustrate that the speech functions which I have been discussing are not abstruse concepts coined by the linguists, but functions which language is commonly felt to have by its speakers.

A particular kind of metacommunication is meta-language: language about language, language which refers to itself. Again this is not something which has been dreamed up by the theoretical linguists. Consider some more commonly heard expressions: 'How dare you talk to me like that!', 'She said it with such feeling', 'He likes nothing better than to hear the sound of his own voice', 'He always knows what to leave unsaid', 'Who are you to talk?', 'Who do you think you're talking to?', 'Don't use that tone of voice with me!' All these common expressions draw attention to the constant gap between 'what is said' and 'what is meant', and therefore to the need to do constant interpretive work on speech.

Teachers constantly use language with primarily metacommunicational functions. Consider the following more detailed examples of the kind of metacommunication which characterises teacher-talk. The examples between double quotes are taken from notes made during observation of English lessons in an Edinburgh secondary school. They are the actual words spoken by teachers. For illustration, I have chosen examples which, even out of context, have clear metacommunicational function, but the context must be taken into account in interpreting the function of utterances in this way. The different kinds of metacommunication which I illustrate here, can, without much adjustment, be further formalised into a category system which would therefore comprise one possible coding scheme for classifying tape-recorded samples of teacher-pupil interaction.

1. ATTRACTING OR SHOWING ATTENTION. A teacher constantly makes remarks primarily to attract or hold the attention of the pupils, and therefore merely to prepare them for the message still to come.

"Right! Fags out please!" (The context of this example was given earlier.)

"Now, don't start now, just listen."

"Yeah, well, come on now, you guys!"

"Eh, wait a minute, let's get the facts."

(The teacher claps his hands several times.)

"Right, right, right, right, right, right!"

"... you pair of budgies at the back!"

Or he may say something to show his own continued attention to the pupils when they are speaking.

"Yeah." "Mmhm." "Uhuh."

2. CONTROLLING THE AMOUNT OF SPEECH. Teachers frequently exert control simply over whether pupils speak or not. This may take the form of an order to a pupil to say something, or a request (usually an order) not to speak.

"Do you want to say something at this point?"

"Brenda? ... (long pause). Morag?"

"Anything else you can say about it?"

"I could do with a bit of silence."

"I don't like this chattering away."

"Look, I'd prefer it if you belted up."

"Who's that shouting and screaming?"

"Eh, some of you are not joining in the studious silence we're trying to develop."

3. CHECKING OR CONFIRMING UNDERSTANDING. Teachers may check whether they have understood a pupil, or confirm that they have understood.

"A very serious what? I didn't catch you."

"I see."

And they may try and check whether their pupils are following.

"Do you understand, Stevie?"

4. SUMMARIZING. Teachers often summarize something that has been said or read, or summarize the situation reached in a discussion or lesson; or they may ask a pupil to give a summary of something that has been said or read.

"The rest all seem to disagree with you."

"Well, what I'm trying to say is ... "

5. DEFINING. A teacher may offer a definition or re-formulation of something that has been said or read.

"'Incarnate' - that means 'in the flesh'."

"Well, these are words suggesting disapproval."

"'Sonsie' is just 'well stacked'."

"'Whore' - (the word occurred in a poem) - now you don't want to get too technical about that word - it's just a girl."

Or the teacher may ask a pupil to give a definition, or to clarify something.

"Well, Brenda, does that mean anything to you?"

"What's 'glaikit'?"

"Eh, what's the meaning of 'hurdies'?"

"David, what's the meaning of 'hurdies'?"

"Can anybody put that in a different way?"

('Sonsie', 'glaikit' and 'hurdies' are Scots words, meaning respectively 'attractive, buxom', 'stupid' and 'buttocks or hips'.)

6. EDITING. He may comment on something a pupil has said or written, implying a criticism or value judgement of some kind.

"I take it you're exaggerating."

"That's a good point."

"That's getting nearer it."

"No, no, we don't want any silly remarks."

7. CORRECTING. Or he may actually correct or alter something a pupil has said or written, either explicitly or by repeating the 'correct' version.

{ Teacher: "David, what's the meaning of 'paramount'?"
 { Pupil: "Important."
 { Teacher: "Yes, more than that, all-important."

(The teacher is correcting a pupil's essay with him.) "The expression 'less well endowed' might be the expression you're wanting - men don't usually pursue women because they're 'well-built'."

8. SPECIFYING TOPIC. Finally, the teacher may focus on a topic of discussion or place some limits on the relevance of what may be said.

"I'm not sure what subject to take."

"You see, we're really getting onto the subject now."

"Now, we were talking about structures and all that."

"Now, before I ask you to write something about it, we'll talk about it."

"Well, that's another big subject."

Note firstly that the criteria for the kinds of teacher-talk discussed, are consistently functional. I am concerned here with the kinds of things that teachers do, and not directly with the 'style' of language in which they do it. A teacher may ask his pupils to "develop a studious silence" or to "belt up". On my analysis, both these requests fulfil the same function of controlling the amount of talk in the classroom.

Secondly, the way in which I have described the speech functions means that some functions are automatically subcategories of others. For example, if a teacher defines

something that has been said, then he is also performing the function of checking that his pupils understand something, as well as attracting their attention. Similarly, if the teacher requests a pupil to define something, he is again checking whether he and the pupils are on the same wavelength, as well as requesting the pupil to speak and also attracting attention. It is for this reason that I have been careful all along to speak of utterances having a 'primary' or 'main' function. For it is a characteristic of speech that utterances typically fulfil several distinct functions simultaneously, although it is often possible to rank them in order of importance.

My claim is firstly then that the examples I have given of teacher-talk all have a primarily metacommunicational function of monitoring the working of the communication channels, clarifying and reformulating the language used.

My second claim is that such metacommunication is highly characteristic of teacher-talk, not only because it comprises a high percentage of what teachers do spend their time saying to their pupils, but also in the sense that its use is radically asymmetrical. Speakers hold quite specific expectations that it is the teacher who uses it. It is almost never used by the pupils, and when it is, it is a sign that an atypical teaching situation has arisen.

As a more extended example of the kind of analysis I have proposed of teachers' use of language, consider the following extract from the beginning of a tape-recorded discussion between a young native English speaking teacher and two French boys, aged twelve. The communication is problematic in some of the ways I discussed above. The teacher has been asked to discuss a specific subject, capital punishment, with the pupils. Initiating a discussion is typically more problematic than continuing it once it is underway. (Consider the difficulty sometimes

caused by having to initiate social contacts and 'break the ice' with strangers, and how offering cigarettes and other ruses are often used to oil the embarrassing first moments.) But here, the teacher has the added problem of explaining to pupils who do not speak very good English, exactly what is required of them. Almost all his effort is therefore devoted to coaxing along the communication process itself: proposing a topic of discussion, checking if his pupils are following, defining terms, inviting the pupils to speak, editing and correcting their language. There is almost nothing he says in this short extract which does not fall into one of the categories of metacommunication as defined above. The primarily metacommunicational functions of the teacher's language are glossed down the right-hand side of the page.

(The punctuation used for written English cannot adequately represent speech, but has been used to facilitate reading of the extract. It does not affect the points I am making. Dashes [-] are used to represent hesitation pauses. One dash equals a pause of the length of one beat at the speed the speaker is talking at that moment. Two dashes equal a pause of two beats; three dashes, a pause of three beats or longer.)

LITERAL TRANSCRIPT OF TAPE-RECORDING

METACOMMUNICATIONAL FUNCTIONS

Tl. Right,	Attracts pupils' attention
as I was saying - em --	Attracts pupils' attention
the subject of the discussion is capital punishment --	Defines topic of discussion
Now -	Attracts pupils' attention
you don't understand what this means --	Checks if pupils understand
Capital punishment --- is when --- a murderer -	Defines a term
Do you know what a murderer is? ---	Checks if pupils understand
A murderer.	Repeats to check understanding

P1. Yes

T1. If a man kills another man

P1. Ah yes, yes.

T1. he is a murderer -

Defines a word

Then --- when - a
murderer is arrested ---
and he has a trial ---
then what happens to him
afterwards? ---

Invitation to speak

What happens after that?

Reformulated to check understanding

P1. He has a punishment.

T1. Yes.

Value judgement on answer

He is punished.

Alters pupil's language

P1. Punished.

T1. Now ---

Attracts pupils' attention

What punishment do you
think he should get?

Invitation to speak

P2. Prison.

T1. Prison

Checks his own understanding
or shows attention

P2. [Makes strangling
gesture.]

T1. Can you tell what - ?
Explain?

Explicit invitation to speak,
and clarify

P2. They put a rot

T1. A rope

Corrects pupil's English

P2. A rope --- around his
neck.

T1. Yes.

Shows attention

P2. And hang him.

T1. And hang him.

Repeats to check his own understanding or show attention

So, ah, we've got two
different ideas here.

Summarises situation reached

In this fairly extreme, and for that reason all the more revealing example, one can see very clearly some of the strategies which a native speaker of English employs to try and keep in touch with a foreign speaker, and which a teacher employs to keep in touch with pupils. Very few studies have explored what speakers actually do in order to communicate across this kind of language barrier.

Now contrast the example of teacher-pupil discussion above with the following extract between another young native English speaking teacher and two older French children, aged seventeen. The main point to be noted about the following extract is that the pupils use language which has clear metacommunicational functions - in other words they use language which is normally restricted to the teacher. The teacher still uses language to try and direct the discussion, although he lets some mistakes go without comment. But the pupils are also spontaneously using language to object, refer back to things they have previously said, defining terms they have used, summing up their own position, questioning the teacher's summary of what they have said, and questioning his right to ask certain questions. This means that the teaching situation is more like a genuine discussion with the participants on an equal footing. On the other hand, the teacher's position is threatened to some extent, and this is reflected in the way he has lost his casualness. He hesitates, repeats words and phrases, and has a lot of false starts.

A discussion on corporal punishment has been underway for about ten minutes.

- T2. You don't think corporal punishment is eh --- in a school - you think corporal punishment is all right at home -- but eh - but not in a school.
- P3. No, I don't say that. I said until a certain level the cane I am against.

T2. 'Until a certain level', I don't understand you.

P3. Ah yes, I explained ten minutes ago.

T2. Well, I still don't - 'until a certain level', I don't - I don't quite understand what you mean.

P3. The cane I am against, slaps I am for.

T2. Oh - yeah --- I see.

P4. I can't agree - if eh, a smack can do nothing

T2. A slap.

P4. A slap can do nothing if eh - I don't know - a text to learn by heart do nothing.

T2. You think that a text is just the same thing - thing to give eh -- something like em -- lines -- to write out or to learn - it's just the same thing?

P4. It's not the same thing - I don't say that - it has no more effect.

T2. It has no more effect.

[The discussion continued with P4 telling a story about a friend of a friend who had committed suicide after being corporally punished in school. The teacher brought the discussion to a close as follows.]

T2. Would you like to eh say - sum up what you think about -- corporal punishment in general?

P3. In general?

T2. Like to sum up yeah - what you think now after this discussion --- in a few words to say --- what you think.

P3. I am always of the same opinion. I am against.

T2. You're against corporal punishment.

P3. Yes.

T2. And eh

P3. There are we have too many bad consequences in the future for --

P4. But I keep the same opinion as the eh

T2. You have the same opinion.

P4. Yes. Because what you said - what you said - what you told us, it's nothing. I have destroyed - for me, I think that - it seems for me that with the last example that I give you, all your opinions are com - all your em ---

T2. Arguments.

P4. Arguments are completely destroyed.

T2. For you.

P4. Yes, I think.

T2. Well, I think we'll leave it at that.

The discussion ended at this point. Having provided the pupil with the word he needs to complete his attack, the teacher simply breaks off discussion with a conventional phrase. The loss of casualness throughout the teacher's speech indicates a break in the routines. As Hymes says:¹⁵

'In general, instances of the breaking off of communication or uneasiness in it, are good evidence of a rule or expectation about speaking ...'

If people feel uneasy when one thing happens, then they had expectations that something else could have, or should have, happened in its place. So the extract illustrates another way in which the study of miscommunication is fruitful: a useful way of working out what rules hold in a situation, if there is no direct way to observe them, is to study what happens when they are broken. Speakers have systematic ways of adapting to the problematic, but these ways are restricted. Some measure of speakers' rigidity or flexibility in adapting to breaks in the routines can probably be developed. One could study for example whether different teachers make different use of the metacommunicational functions listed above.

A descriptive rule of speech behaviour

What I have called the systems-management aspect

of situations of talk, has two sides to it: firstly, the effort which goes into simply making the interaction continue smoothly; and secondly, the expression of values which underlies this.

I have already pointed out the radically asymmetrical situation of talk which typically holds in a school classroom. One can go further and say that many forms of language which a teacher uses frequently with his pupils would simply not be tolerated in other situations in which different expectations hold about the rights which the various speakers have. For example, a typical teacher-question is 'What do you mean?' Pupils are frequently asked to define more precisely what they are talking about. But Garfinkel describes experiments in which people were asked to clarify the meaning of common-sense remarks made in the course of different everyday conversations and small chat about the weather, the speaker's health, activities they were engaged in, and so forth.¹⁶ When students asked unsuspecting friends and spouses to clarify 'what they meant' by remarks which would ordinarily have passed unnoticed, initial bewilderment sometimes passed into violent reactions of the 'what do you mean' 'what do I mean' type. Having described several incidents of this kind, Garfinkel does not make explicit however that only specific social situations where specific role relations hold between speakers will permit explicit monitoring of the other's speech in this way.

The quite specific expectations which speakers hold about what constitutes appropriate monitoring behaviour for other participants can be formulated as a descriptive rule as follows.^{17,18} Suppose there are two speakers, A and B. Now,

if A makes repeated and unmitigated statements about B's speech, or asks repeated and unmitigated questions about B's understanding of A, B will accept these statements or questions as

legitimate and appropriate, only if B believes that A has the right to make such statements or ask such questions; and this right is inherent in only a limited number of role relationships of which the paradigm example is teacher-pupil, where A fills the role of teacher.

The various qualifications in the rule as I have formulated it, cover various cases. A pupil may sometimes be permitted to ask mitigated metaquestions of a teacher, such as 'I don't quite see what you mean' (hypothetical example). Similarly, I specify 'repeated' since a pupil may get away with an occasional example, but only a teacher can do it frequently. This is a case of a particular difficulty in describing speech behaviour, namely that there are often no absolutes which can be isolated in interaction analysis. A feature of speech may express no particular social information about the speaker if present in low proportion, but will give significant information in high percentages. For example, little information about the social relationships of speaker and hearer is available from the fact that metacommunication occurs. I gave examples above of everyday metacommunicational statements, and said that states of talk are always propped up and coaxed along in this way to some extent. But a very high percentage of utterances with a metacommunicational function, all used by one speaker, would probably indicate a teaching situation.

Note also the kind of concepts which I have used in the formulation of the rule of speech behaviour. The rule includes explicitly sociological concepts such as 'rights' and 'role relationships'. Some problems of linguistic description can only be solved in sociolinguistic terms - notions of variety-shifting require concepts of 'appropriateness' and 'language function' to deal with them. So it seems also that some aspects of sociolinguistic description can only be formulated in sociological terms.

One of the general implications of the view of verbal interaction put forward in this paper, is that any situation of talk is a microcosm of basic social and personal relationships. The kind of language used by speakers reflects who is talking to whom, and what the point of the talk is. By the very way in which a teacher talks to his pupils, he inevitably communicates to them his definition of the situation, the form of teacher-pupil relationship which he considers appropriate. The teacher's values, concerning, for example, who has the right to control talk in the classroom, as well as basic sociocultural values and status relationships are put into effect linguistically.¹⁹ I have indicated one way in which one can study the social order of the classroom through the language used.

Conclusion and summary

This paper suggests both how certain concepts can begin to provide a descriptive language for discussing what teachers do when they talk to their pupils; and also how teaching situations provide a useful focus for developing sociolinguistic theory and method.

I have discussed how language-use displays a speaker's judgemental skill at variety-shifting to suit the social context; and how hearers use their complementary expectations as to what constitutes appropriate language-use in order to do constant interpretive work on language they hear. I have suggested concentrating on aspects of miscommunication, both as an estrangement device to enable the researcher to get free of some of his own expectations about language-use, and also as a focus for studying the skill which speakers have for dealing with problematic aspects of speech events. Variety-shifting implies a constant monitoring of behaviour which is characteristic of all human social behaviour²⁰, and I have shown how this monitoring is particularly striking and central to 'teaching' as a speech event.

This view of teaching gives one precise interpretation to often quoted statements to the effect that 'we are all teachers',²¹ in the sense that speakers are often concerned to persuade and influence their audiences. In other words, the approach shows one way in which teaching can be studied in relation to a wider framework of social interaction theory. A weakness of many studies of verbal interaction in the classroom has been their context-bound character - the kind of description given of teacher-talk has often been inapplicable to other varieties of language-use.²²

Much of the paper has emphasised the complexity of communicative behaviour in the classroom, and the wide-ranging interpretations which pupils inevitably place on minimal perceptual cues. Data on teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom are notoriously difficult to handle. I have tried to show that, in order to deal with this complexity, more carefully thought out techniques and concepts are needed. The main concepts which I have used are: language-variation, language function, variety-shifting, expectations, speaker roles, and descriptive rules. These concepts were used as a basis for developing the concepts of 'monitoring' and 'meta-communication'. Some of these concepts are explicitly sociological as well as linguistic. But I have also shown that these concepts are embedded in everyday idioms and expressions concerning language-use, and therefore reflect the way in which speakers talk about their own speech behaviour.

Linguistics (socio- or other) has no fully worked-out set of techniques to offer the educationalist interested in speech behaviour; there are neither accepted ways of doing fieldwork, nor of analysing and presenting recorded or observational data on face-to-face interaction. The direction for research is therefore to maintain a clear theoretical framework, but to try and make some of the concepts (concerning 'monitoring' behaviour, for

example) more precise, in order to isolate the kind of cues which speakers pick up and interpret. What research on speech behaviour needs, is a hard look at 'soft' theory. In this paper, I have shown how various concepts can be illustrated from field data, and have briefly indicated how a more formalised description may be based on systematic coding of recorded data²³, and the formulation of associated descriptive rules of appropriate speech behaviour.

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Notes

1. All examples of teacher-talk given in this paper between double quotes are the actual words spoken by teachers and noted down at the time during periods of classroom observation. Spelling and punctuation have been conventionalised.
 2. Hymes' term. Cf note 6.
 3. American readers might put a different interpretation again on 'fags'! This only strengthens my point about the problematic nature of interpreting such language-use.
 4. Distinctions which some linguists make between 'styles', 'varieties', 'codes', 'registers' and 'dia-types' are not relevant to my argument here.
 5. Cf the title of an article by J.A. Fishman: Who speaks what language to whom and when? 1965, La Linguistique.
 6. The best known approach to describing speech behaviour along these lines was proposed by Jakobson 1960 and slightly modified by Hymes 1962 and subsequent publications. The discussion of the different functions of utterances on p.4,5, is based loosely on the Jakobson-Hymes approach. My use of the term 'metalinguistic' later in the paper does not correspond with Hymes'.
- R. Jakobson (1960) Closing statement: linguistics and poetics, in T.A. Sebeok, ed., Style in Language, MIT Press.
- D. Hymes (1962) The ethnography of speaking, in J.A. Fishman, ed., Readings in the Sociology of Language, The Hague, Mouton, 1968.

7. Quoted in R.E. Pittenger, C.F. Hockett, J.J. Danehy (1960) The First Five Minutes. A Sample of Microscopic Interview Analysis, Ithaca, New York, p.234.
8. A point made independently by Chomsky in his criticism of American structural linguistics, and by the ethnomethodologists in their criticism of classical sociology.
9. H. Garfinkel (1967) Studies in Ethnomethodology, Prentice Hall, p.36.
10. Cf Garfinkel, op cit, p.38, where he proposes techniques 'as aids to a sluggish imagination' which 'produce reflections through which the strangeness of an obstinately familiar world can be detected'.
11. Garfinkel, op cit, p.38: 'procedurally it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and see what can be done to make trouble'.
12. A classic example in another field is Freud's study The Psychopathology of Everyday Life, based entirely on the notion of how revealing mistakes in speech can be.
13. E.Goffman (1955) On face-work: an analysis of ritual elements in social interaction, in Where the Action Is, Allen Lane, 1969.
14. For a different analysis of metacommunication, see some of Goffman's work on face-to-face interaction, where he deals with the procedural rules which initiate and terminate talk, guide messages, change topics, etc.; e.g. 'Encounters are organised by means of communications about communications.'.
- E. Goffman (1963) Behaviour in Public Places. Notes on Social Organisation of Gatherings, Free Press, New York, p.99.
15. Hymes, op cit, 1962.
16. Garfinkel, op cit, p.42 ff.
17. Labov has proposed rules of this kind for other aspects of speech behaviour. See
- W. Labov (1970) The study of language in its social context, Studium Generale, 23(1), 30-87; extract in Pier Paolo Giglioli, ed., Language and Social Context, Penguin Modern Sociology Readings, 1972.
18. This rule concerning appropriate monitoring behaviour could be considered as a particular example of Goffman's general concept of 'civil inattention'. See Goffman, op cit, 1963.

19. The notion that people hold specific expectations as to what constitutes appropriate social behaviour, links closely to the idea that teachers' expectations affect their pupils' behaviour. But research on this has failed to show the kind of cues that pupils pick up. Having written a whole book showing that teachers' expectations do have an effect on pupils' performance, Rosenthal and Jacobson have to admit: 'We do not know how a teacher's expectations for a pupil's intellectual growth is communicated to the pupil'.

R. Rosenthal, L. Jacobson (1968) Pygmalion in the Classroom, Holt, Rinehard and Winston, p.162.

For another study of the effect of expectations on students, see L. Hudson (1968) Frames of Mind, Pelican, 1970, p.92 ff.

20. A recent and very full account of the concept of 'monitoring', which places it at the centre of a theory of social behaviour, is R. Harre, P. Secord (1972) The Explanation of Social Behaviour, Blackwell.

21. This particular quote is from

A. Morrison, D. McIntyre (1969) Teachers and Teaching, Penguin Science of Behaviour.

22. For example, the coding categories in Flanders' systematic observational schedule are not applicable to speech situations other than traditional classroom teaching, or at least situations in which clear authority patterns hold between speakers. Flanders' coding schedule is given on p.30 of Morrison and McIntyre, op cit.

23. A category scheme and associated model of meta-communicational functions of speech have now been set up by the author, and are being used to code tape-recordings of teaching situations.

Appendix D

"Review of C Casden, V John & D Hymes, eds, Functions of Language in the Classroom"

From Language in Society, 3, 1, April 1974.

REVIEWS

COURTNEY B. CAZDEN, VERA P. JOHN & DELL HYMES, eds, *Functions of language in the classroom*. London and New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1972. Pp. lvii + 394.

There is an immediate problem facing a reviewer of this collection of articles. Should he review the articles as they stand? Or should he review the book which is promised so unambiguously by its title, but whose proposed theme surfaces completely in only a few of the articles? Many of the papers in the collection, excellent as most of them are individually, would be more at home in a book with a more general title, such as 'Functions of language in community, home and school'.

On a narrow definition, only four articles out of fourteen directly study functions of language *in the classroom*. Out of these, one article (Mischler) analyses teacher-pupil conversation tape-recorded in actual classrooms; three others (Boggs, Dumont, Philips) provide ethnographic data on teacher-pupil interaction gathered by participant observation.

The other papers are largely background material (important as this may be) to the study of language-use in classrooms. Thus, papers on American Indian, Hawaiian, Negro and Mexican-American speakers, and on the deaf, emphasize how all-pervasive are sociolinguistic values and culturally learned modes of interpretation. Black children, for example, cannot avoid bringing into the classroom their own verbal culture with its traditions of gaining prestige through particular forms of verbal skill. But the papers on Blacks, Mexican-Americans and deaf children fail to provide what would be the really gripping observational data: the effect of pupil's communicative expectations on their actual classroom behaviour and experiences. The final sentence of Hymes's introductory chapter is accurate: 'These papers *broach* what might be called the ethnography of communication in classrooms' (liv, my emphasis).

The topics of what I read as 'background' papers are as follows. A general perspective on (especially non-verbal) communication as a culturally learned system, illustrated by descriptions of isolated classroom incidents (Byers and Byers). Native signing among the deaf as a fully-developed natural human language: this paper is, I think, useful as the most accessible presentation of Cicourel's important, but difficult, theory on the nature of human communication (Cicourel and Boese). The uncharacteristic (as compared with the U.S.A.) lack of stigma attached to use of non-standard German dialect in Swabian schools (Fishman and Lueders-Salmon). Spanish-English code-switching amongst adult Mexican-Americans as a communicative skill with definite communicative ends of expressing cultural identity and values, and a brief discussion of how teachers of bilingual pupils would benefit from understanding the social meanings conveyed by code-switching (Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez). The misleading distinction drawn between 'abstract' and 'concrete'

language, as this is related to the question of standard English in schools (Leacock). A critique of the concept of compensatory education, arguing that working- and middle-class children differ in the contexts in which they tend to use particularistic and universalistic language, rather than differ in their absolute knowledge of such language forms (Bernstein). A behaviourist-oriented study of language functions in the speech of two 3-year old negro children tape-recorded at play in their home (Horner and Gussow). Native negro speaker's concepts and evaluations of Black English (Mitchell-Kernan). Black American speech events, how language functions for the black child in his own cultural setting, and suggestions of how such knowledge might feed into a classroom language-development programme for black children (Kochman). A distillation of personal ethnographic observations in Navajo community and schools (John).

All the papers, except Bernstein and Philips, are published here for the first time.

Now, Hymes is correct to argue in his introduction that 'our perspective on language in the classroom should be that of communication as a whole' (xxvii-xxviii). But this argument is a corrective to *theoretical* linguists, who have long treated language altogether out of context. It provides no encouragement to sociolinguists to look directly at language data collected in their social context. Similarly, I read Hymes's statement that 'the key to understanding language in context is to start, not with language, but with context' (xix) as an overstatement, aimed at converting theoretical linguists to a position which readers of *Language in Society* presumably already occupy.

So, I do not intend to be needlessly literal-minded about the book's title. Most book-titles are not over-informative. But in this instance, it points to an important issue. For my main comment on the book as a whole is that it displays, with certain exceptions, a reluctance of the researcher to go inside the classroom, and to record and observe what teachers and pupils actually say to each other – and to then use this as central (but not the only) data on 'functions of language in the classroom'.

A lesson might be learned from educational research, i.e. research done by educationalists, where there has long been a paradoxical reluctance to study teaching and learning by watching teachers and learners in their everyday settings. Only relatively recently have educational researchers (such as Louis Smith and Philip Jackson in the U.S.A.) spent long periods of time observing classroom life, and getting to know and understand pupils and teachers. There is, therefore, a critical lack of basic, direct ethnographic data (not only linguistic ethnography) on school classrooms. Educational work based on observation and partial recording of classroom language is also a relatively recent event (the best-known work here being by Ned Flanders), and although a vast number of studies using systematic observation and coding techniques have accumulated, they have largely failed to draw on sociolinguistic concepts.

The papers in the present book provide many concepts which could usefully contribute to such educational research on classroom life. But only a few of the

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papers ground these concepts closely in data on classroom communication. I will concentrate on these papers as they seem to me to represent the direction in which sociolinguistics must now go. (I am writing this review from the standpoint of a practising researcher on spoken interaction and on classroom language in particular. But I think it is true that practising teachers – at whom the book is also aimed – demand of research that it tell them how classrooms 'really are'. It is for this reason that the vast bulk of educational research, which, almost perversely, tells us little about everyday events in the classroom jungle, remains unread by teachers. And if, as Hymes argues (xiv), it is up to teachers to become their own classroom ethnographers, it would be of great help to them to be presented with more examples of actual ethnographic description.)

Mischler's paper tackles the problem head-on. He argues that studies of language-use must present data in a form which is open to reanalysis: a minimal requirement for this is verbatim transcripts of tape-recorded talk. The researcher's problem is then to analyse what was actually said, in ways which preserve features of speech in use, and which link these features to theory. Mischler gives various examples of how specific forms of language used by teachers are indicators of different cognitive strategies, and therefore how teachers inevitably 'construct a world' through their talk. He gives a simple example of a teacher's use of open-ended questions, which imply the general pedagogic message that alternative answers are possible: not a taken for granted assumption in every classroom. A more complex example, documented from a transcript, shows how a teacher's shift from singulars to plurals, indicates to pupils a generalization she wishes to put across. Mischler shows how such general teaching strategies are displayed (or betrayed) in the very fine grain of a teacher's use of pronouns ('we' versus 'you'), shifts in tenses, question forms, and so on. He successfully demonstrates that the enterprise of revealing such micro-structure in talk is not impossible.

The paper by Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez provides similar tape-recorded data to closely document the social meanings of code-switching amongst adult bilinguals: it unfortunately does not provide equivalent data recorded in the classroom.

Mischler's method is not, of course, the only way of studying functions of language in the classroom. I am not arguing for narrowing the focus of sociolinguistic studies. One of the strengths of the book is that it avoids a premature orthodoxy in a new and developing field. The papers by Boggs, Dumont and Philips provide ethnographic data on Hawaiian, Sioux and Cherokee classrooms, collected mainly by participant observation, involving intimate (and in Dumont's case, native) understanding of the situations. The three papers provide descriptive accounts of aspects of pupils' classroom behaviour which puzzles and frustrates white teachers, because it does not fit into the Anglo-American expectations of how pupils should, for example, answer questions posed by teachers. (Boggs also analyses tape-recorded data, but again this is off the central theme as it consists exclusively of interviews between the children and the researcher.)

The material on Indian classrooms is important for the way in which it reveals how much British and American schools take it for granted that teaching and learning *are* talking, i.e. that teaching is *verbal* explanation. The cultural expectations of Indian pupils lead them to see learning as watching or doing, and teaching as showing. Such ethnographic data, which reveals Anglo-American presuppositions about the nature of 'teaching', adds a new dimension to findings on the amount of time which teachers tend to spend talking in the classroom. Flanders (1970), in a large number of studies, has shown that of all talk in traditional 'chalk and talk' classrooms, about 70 per cent, on average, is produced by the teacher!

Probably the most difficult task facing us as sociolinguists is to find rigorous methods of documenting our concepts by tying them down to actual talk – bearing in mind, as Byers and Byers neatly put it, that 'there is more to talk than language' (8). Such data is messy: close transcripts of conversation are distressingly complex. From this point of view, however, the classroom is a convenient starting point for analysing conversational data, since it typically provides examples of talk which are relatively highly structured – as compared with casual conversation – in the sense of being often closely controlled by the teacher. And some attempts *are* being made to look directly at such data from spoken classroom interaction. For example, the paper by Gumperz & Herasimchuk (1972) tackles the problem of describing data on classroom talk more directly than the Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez paper in the present volume. And in Britain, work by Sinclair *et al.* (1972) at Birmingham and by Stubbs (1972) at Edinburgh, has also made a start in coming to grips with describing spontaneous teacher-pupil talk. But this is a new area. As Hymes says correctly in his introduction: 'there was almost nothing of this sort a few years ago' (xiii).

The principles which Hymes states in his introductory essay are valid and important: that 'the observer's analysis ultimately stands or falls on its success in understanding the values and meanings that inhere in the observed behaviour' (xvii); that 'studying language in the classroom is not really "applied" linguistics: it is really basic research' (xviii); and that 'the ethnography of a situation is not for a non-participant to say' (xxxiii). But I would add a further principle: that the analysis of functions of *language in the classroom* ultimately stands or falls on its success in documenting how attitudes, values and meanings are embodied in observed and recorded instances of what teachers and pupils actually say to each other in the classroom.

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Appendix E

**"Some structural complexities of talk in meetings",
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WORKING PAPERS IN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: No.5.

"SOME STRUCTURAL COMPLEXITIES OF TALK IN MEETINGS"

© English Language Research
University of Birmingham

November 1973

Notes

The data for this paper are drawn from some three hours' audio-recordings (and an associated 150 pages or so of transcripts) of naturally occurring industrial meetings. Fragments of data labelled C are from a committee meeting, those labelled N are from a trade union/management negotiation. Bracketed numbers throughout the paper refer the reader to extracts of data in the appendix. In the negotiation data, M identifies the management speakers, and T the trade unionists. M1 and T1 are the spokesmen. In the committee meeting data, Ch denotes the chairman, S is the secretary, and other speakers are given names. All names are pseudonyms.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents some preliminary observations on the organisation of spoken discourse in industrial committees and negotiations. The data for these observations consist of audio-recordings of naturally occurring situations, i.e. meetings which were in no way set up for our benefit as researchers.

The fact that the data are drawn from "industrial meetings" does not always have the same relevance in my discussion. At some points I propose a rule that seems to hold for "industrial negotiations". At other points, I say only that these data are structured by mechanisms not previously found in teacher-pupil and doctor-patient talk (as analysed in Sinclair et al 1972, Stubbs 1972, WPDA 1).

The observations are in no way intended as a "system" for analysing (transcripts or recordings of) such talk. It will be clear to the reader that they do not give comprehensive coverage of the data. But I hope that the observations are in such a form as to allow the reader to then notice similar structural features of talk.

2. "COHEARENCE"

I take it as a premise in this paper that the task of discourse analysis is to explain the cohesion and coherence* which we perceive in spoken discourse, i.e. I take it as a minimal requirement of discourse analysis that it should account for the native speaker's intuitions concerning ways in which conversation is heard as connected and orderly. I assume that not even the first step in discourse analysis can be taken unless such connectedness is studied.

It is not possible, for example, to "code" utterances as isolated units (e.g. as acts or moves**) and then, as a later stage, to look for recurrent patterns. This is an impossible procedure for two reasons. First, such coding involves knowledge of how utterances are

*Widdowson (1972) draws a useful distinction between grammatical cohesion between sentences in text, and coherence between underlying acts of communication. Exchanges may be coherent as discourse, without being cohesive as text. I use connectedness as a neutral term.

**I use the terms act, move, exchange and transaction as terms in a hierarchic rank system as proposed in Sinclair et al 1972.

sequentially placed, i.e. the outcome (the analysis of sequential ordering) is presupposed in the initial coding. Second, such a procedure would reveal sequences in only the very weak sense of successive positions of hands on a clock face (to use Schegloff's 1972 metaphor) and would not be able to account for the intuition that certain utterances set up expectations in the hearer that other utterances of a particular kind are yet to come.

In other words, I am assuming that Labov is correct when he says (1970:79):

"The fundamental problem of discourse analysis is to show how one utterance follows another in a rational rule-governed manner - in other words how we understand coherent discourse ..."

I am merely positing a slightly less ambitious aim than Labov expresses here, by saying that we should account for the kinds of connectedness which hearers recognise. The ideal (which Labov expresses) is to account for how this perceived connectedness contributes to hearers' understanding of discourse.

I also, in this paper, assume a weak version of the argument that hearers construct the coherence of what they hear, by themselves performing a structural analysis on the discourse in which they participate.*

3. COMPLEXITY IN MEETING-TALK: SOME INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

I will start with some general remarks on certain types of complexity in meeting-talk. The following sections of the paper will then be concerned to document some of these general points in more detail from specific stretches of audio-recorded data.

3.1. Types of complexity

By "complexity", I am thinking of such frequent conversational occurrences as: false starts, self corrections, ungrammatical and

*Chomsky's work has clearly shown that native speakers must perform very abstract structural analyses on sentences in order to understand them. This is the point of examples such as "John is easy to please" and "John is eager to please", which have the same surface structure, but different deep structures and interpretations. But this raises the problem of the possibly dubious analogy between grammatical and discourse analysis to which I refer again below.

unfinished sentences; one speaker completing another speaker's sentence; overlapping utterances; and simultaneous and distinct conversations. But I will concentrate mainly on different types of structural complexity such as: the lack of a recursive 2- or 3- part exchange system (as has been found in teacher-pupil talk); insertion and side sequences*; disjoined sequences; reparatory sequences (e.g. corrections); "dangling" sequences (which receive no overt response); and the insertion of long "monologues" into multi-party talk**.

Such types of complexity are very common in the audio-recordings of committees and negotiations. They are much less common in the teacher-pupil and doctor-patient recordings, where they have not posed a critical problem for discourse analysis. (See Sinclair et al 1972, WPDA 1.)

I will start, then, from two unoriginal observations, that (compared with, e.g., the classroom and with doctor-patient consultations) meetings (a) are fairly egalitarian speech events, in which different speakers have relatively equal conversational rights, and (b) have a larger set of speaker rôles associated with them. As well as rôles such as chairman, secretary and committee members, the members of a negotiation are likely to be divided formally into two sides. Rôles of chairman and spokesman for one side may or may not coincide. Such an increase in the number of speaker rôles may not simply increase the complexity of the discourse structure, e.g. by increasing in geometric progression the turn-taking options. It

*Terms proposed by Schegloff 1972 and Jefferson 1972 which I discuss further below in 4.2.

**An analysis of monologue structure will have to be left till another paper. Note for the present however that monologues are "noninteractive" in only the very weak sense that one speaker talks uninterrupted for a longish period, say a couple of minutes. Such talk is interactive in the much stronger sense that the speaker constantly takes account of his hearers by the ways he structures his talk. Many of the types of structure discussed in this paper as characteristic of multi-party talk are also found in monologue, e.g. side sequences, prefaces, frames.

may also alter the type of structure and rules involved.

In the traditional "chalk and talk" classroom, there may be forty speakers but only two speaker rôles. This simple situation is combined with a general rule that talk returns to the teacher (T) after each pupil (P) contribution. It would be ^erare, although not impossible, to find sequences such as:

T P1 P2 P3 P4 P2 T P3 ...

The norm is rather:

T P T P T P ... or T P T / T P T / T P T ...

In meetings there may be more than two speaker rôles, and no rule that talk must return to (say) the chairman after each other speaker. This means, for example, that more than one speaker may initiate sequences of talk, without necessarily bidding to contribute, except perhaps in more formal meetings.* Clearly, this complicates turn-taking sequences.

This type of complexity is further increased since, in meetings, talk does not necessarily pass between speakers after, say, every one or two moves. Committee members typically hold the floor for several moves, and may on occasions insert long monologues into the discussion.

There is no guarantee even that the chairman's talk will be explicitly attended to. There are frequent examples in the data where the chairman has to fight for the floor as much as do any of the other speakers. (See data appendix 9, 11.) Rules for turn-taking are vastly simplified if one speaker (e.g. the teacher) never has to bid to contribute to the talk, but is always oriented to as a potential contributor.

Another example of how the type of speaker rôle gives rise to** characteristic types of structural complexity in the talk can be

*I noted the following rule on an English department notice:
"students may attend meetings ... but they are reminded that they cannot speak without the prior consent of the chairman."

**We need discussion here of the two-way process of speaker rôles "giving rise to" the characteristic talk, and of the talk sustaining the rôles. This need not however be an issue for the present paper.

seen when speakers (in a negotiation) distinguish between utterances in which they are speaking as individuals and as spokesman for a "side" in the discussion. Statements made as individuals may be prefaced with, e.g. "as I see it" or "if I take your point". Statements for which speakers claim "official" status* and as representing the views of some collectivity group may typically be prefaced by, e.g., "from a union point of view". Such prefaces are thus a formal and distinguishing feature of such talk.

I take it that the aim of descriptive sociolinguistics or discourse analysis is to isolate such (defining?) characteristics of different discourse types, rather than to, say, describe the "same" features for each discourse type studied.

It is an empirical finding (Sinclair et al 1972) that teacher-pupil talk can usefully be represented as variations on an underlying 3-part recursive system of moves:

(teacher)Initiation - (pupil)Response - (teacher)Feedback, (IRF). It has similarly been found that doctor-patient interviews can usefully be represented as variations on an underlying 2- or 3-part exchange which is thus in some ways similar to the structure of teacher-pupil talk. Given the recursive underlying structure of teacher-pupil and doctor-patient talk, in at least a large proportion of such talk, one primary device which brings about speaker-change is relatively simple: the teacher or doctor asks a question and the pupil or patient answers it. The teacher or doctor may then have various options of commenting on the answer. In their details, these sequences are complex. But long stretches of talk are nevertheless based on a single underlying thread of question-answer (QA) sequences. It seems that these two types of discourse can be usefully analysed, from one point of view, as variations on QAQAQA, and hence of variations on the "chain rule" (Sacks 1972, Churchill n.d.), i.e. that when a speaker asks a question, it is proper for the

*Such items which claim (or abjure) official status for talk are an important class of speech acts in committees and negotiations. This question will again have to be dealt with elsewhere. But consider for the present such examples as "...before we sort of answer you firmly on this one ..." (data 2), "the panel ratify this" (Cf data 14). I.e. stretches of talk can be marked as (\pm official) or (\pm binding).

person to whom the question is addressed to respond with a direct answer, and then return the floor to the questioner. Churchill discusses how the chain rule as proposed by Sacks is a basic organisational device of conversation, but how it is followed strictly in only a percentage of cases.

Even a superficial examination of talk in meetings and negotiations reveals that the sequential organisation of the talk does not depend primarily on such (variations on) QA sequences. QA pairs certainly occur in meetings, but rather as isolated pairs of items, or as small clusters of pairs, for example, to check an item of information or to confirm an opinion, and often^a therefore as side sequences. An example of QA side sequences from a committee meeting follows:

(C2.410)

Ch	whilst you were away we went into this extremely thoroughly . all of us	X//
Bill	which one	Q
Ch	this is job ninety three section leader	A
Dave	((laughs))	
Ch	hasn't he got . Dave gave us ([job)	Q
Dave	[I gave him	A
Bill	yeah this one here	A
Ch	we went into this greatly thoroughly and ...	resumes X

(where // indicates interrupted item.)

This is a typical example in which two QA pairs are mere side sequences which clear the way for Ch to continue with his interrupted topic. (Cf data 1, 9, and the analysed fragments in sections 5 and 7 below.)

There are also examples in the data of a speaker being explicitly invited to contribute to the talk, but these are rare. (Data 2,3.) There is probably a rule that,

only the chairman can explicitly invite a speaker to contribute to the discourse.

Otherwise, expressed very crudely for the moment, talk appears to proceed via speakers' juxtaposed statements/comments/remarks

which have (intuitively) great topical coherence, but no obvious unified discourse structure in the form of underlying and repetitive sequences of acts and moves. I want then to discuss here aspects of how speaker-change occurs in a speech situation which has no clear connecting thread of QAQAQA or IRFIRFIRF.

Note some other structural consequences of positing a recursive underlying structure for a speech event. If a speech event is presumed to be sequentially ordered by a recursive system of acts or moves, then the order of speakers is largely determined in advance for the whole event. Thus such a recursive system largely solves the problem of how turn-taking occurs, to the extent that such a system can account for who speaks after whom. In a speech event such as a meeting, the turn-taking on the other hand must also be organised through devices which chain one utterance to the next, rather than specifying for whole exchanges or transactions, say, in what order speakers speak.

This is not to say of course that certain overall structural features of meetings are not fixed in advance for the whole speech event. For example, in a meeting, the chairman will predictably speak first and last, to open and close the event. And he will speak first and last within items on the agenda to open and close these. In a negotiation, there appears to be a sequencing rule that the spokesman for one side will speak first after a long statement by the spokesman for the other side, regardless of the content of the statement.

3.2. Discourse as structured

These types of structural complexity may bring out the need, in principle, for multiple theories to account for the coherence of any piece of discourse. To summarise the discussion so far, in slightly different terms, it seems possible, for some speech events, to isolate functional sequences such as QA or IRF which can act as a first level analysis of long stretches of discourse - perhaps even all the discourse which comprises a whole speech event. But research on more egalitarian speech events makes critical any tendency towards an over-simplified notion that "discourse has structure". It is more revealing to say that "discourse is structured": in very detailed

ways and at many levels. But the crucial points are that (a) there are many types of structure/order/organisation/connectedness (e.g. hierarchically ordered underlying acts, moves and exchanges; topical coherence; synchronisation in time; lexical repetition across speakers; explicit metalinguistic control by speakers), and that (b) all the types are not always present simultaneously. It seems best to think of spoken discourse as having many potential mechanisms for giving it connectedness. At any point in discourse, several of these mechanisms will typically be operating simultaneously. But there is no reason to suppose that any one mechanism (e.g. recursive systems of acts and exchanges) will always be operating in all circumstances.

Discourse/^{types}are recognisably different through the different types of organisation they display. Research in this area should provide a way of documenting, at the level of particular features of recorded speech, the Firthian dictum that language is "polysystemic".

3.3. On noticing complexity

An important point is that much of the "complexity" I have started to discuss is only evident in written transcriptions of spontaneous talk. It is typically not evident to the speakers themselves. Conversation looks odd, incoherent and broken when seen in the written medium: but it does not sound odd to those taking part in it. This is not to say that the complexity is an artefact of changing the medium of transmission: but that listeners listen selectively to conversation. They do not hear many of the overlaps, false starts, hesitations, etc.* One aspect of this is that people hear conversation as if it was like the dialogue of a play, with one speaker starting when another

*They may however hear them if the medium is changed in other ways. Compare how, on the radio, members of the audience in discussion programmes or of the public on 'phone-in programmes, appear to hesitate, stammer and leave long gaps - as compared with the chairman's smooth presentation. On the radio we hear smooth presentation as "normal"; in everyday conversation, we hear it as, e.g. "glib".

another finishes.*

Because of the estrangement effect of representing spoken language in the written medium, we can see that conversation is not so evidently coherent as we might have thought. The coherence is achieved through interpretation. The topic for research is then: how does "complex", overlapping talk nevertheless produce the impression of order for its participants? Or how can we explain how conversation, which is evidently (to the eye) full of stops, starts and stammers, nevertheless sounds coherent? A close transcription of spoken conversation can reveal even to the unbeliever ways in which the perceived order of the social world is but an elaborate illusion, whose coherence is constructed by elaborate interpretive work.

* *

I will now discuss some of the problems I have raised, with more detailed reference to audio-recorded data.

*This may be partly explicable as an instance of visual expectations feeding back into audio-perception: the only form of written representation which most people have seen of conversation is in plays and novels. An investigation of dialogue in plays from a discourse analysis point of view would necessarily be a study of how natural conversation is perceived and interpreted.

4. TWO TYPES OF STRUCTURAL COMPLEXITY

Two very general types of structural complexity displayed in the present data are:

- 1) structures which can be analysed by assuming a recursive rewrite rule of the form:

$$XY \rightarrow XXY \text{ or } XYY,$$

where \rightarrow means "rewrite", and XY is an adjacency pair.*

I.e. these are strings in which the "same" act is repeated by more than one speaker.

- 2) structures which can be analysed as involving "inserted" sequences of various types, i.e. structures which could be analysed as

$$\begin{array}{c} X \\ \swarrow \quad \searrow \\ Y \quad P \\ \quad \quad Q \end{array} \quad \text{or} \quad X(PQ)Y$$

where XY and PQ are adjacency pairs or other structures.

There are various reasons for studying such very general structures in discourse. (a) Such complexities may overlay, and therefore tend to conceal, other structural features of the discourse. (b) such structural complexities may be characteristic features of certain discourse types as opposed to others. (c) And, most importantly perhaps, they would show ways in which hearers perceive discourse, not linearly, but in "chunks", and are able to perceive unity in discourse beyond the unity implied by sequential proximity.

4.1. XY \rightarrow XXY or XYY

One very general type of structural complexity results from more than one speaker repeating or reformulating the "same" act or move.

Consider the following sequence from a committee meeting:

*This is the term proposed by Sacks (1972) to refer to pairs of conversational items like question-answer, greeting-greeting, complaint-excuse, request-acceptance. The two parts of an adjacency pair are tied by "conditional relevance" by which is meant: given that the first pair part occurs, the second is expected, and if it does not follow, it is noticeably absent. On this see also Schegloff 1968, 1972. In the terms of Sinclair et al 1972, adjacency pairs are types of exchanges.

(C2.410)

Ch that's eighty two - out of the way for the moment - ei -
 job eighty three
 S no ninety three
 Dave ninety three you've got there
 ? finish ninety three
 Dave this is in the reorganised area
 Ch beg your pardon yes
 le let me try this out ...

A possible structure here would be:

Ch closes item on agenda
 opens item
 S correction
 Dave correction
 ? correction
 Dave correction (plus additional information)
 Ch apology
 resumes ...

It would simplify analysis if we can assume an underlying 2-part adjacency pair, correction-apology, and propose a rule that (under certain constraints) the first pair part may be repeated by different speakers. I.e. we posit rewrite rules of the form:

exchange \rightarrow C + Ap (correction + apology)
 $C + Ap \rightarrow C + C + Ap$, where different C's are given by
 different speakers.

An indication that participants hear what I have coded as repeated corrections as one unit at some level, is that Ch does not respond to each correction - he does one apology for the sequence, and then resumes his topic. It would not be an option for one of the speakers to then come in and complain, "you only apologised to one of us".

Note that this type of analysis also partly solves the problem of how the string of C's is coherent. The structure proposes that the C's are not linked to each other, but are all independently linked back to the "mistake", and forward to the apology. The C's may

also be linked among themselves by other means, but that is a different problem for analysis.

Other utterance pairs allow recursion of the second pair part. Consider this example of data:

(C2.006)

Dave Bill - you know this other information ...
that rings a bell I mean [when he says that

Roger [yes that came up

Harold it came up at ((name of factory)) didn't it

? yes

Bill yeah we've got one that does that yeah

In the context, Dave's utterance is heard as a question, so a possible structure is: QAAAA. And possible rewrite rules are

exchange → QA

QA → QAA, where different A's are given by different speakers.

Note that in this type of sequence, the first pair part Q does not select next speaker, i.e. the question is asked of Bill who comes in only to confirm what others have said. For the data quoted, apparently "anyone" can provide an answer. Either another device must be proposed to account for the order of turns, or this must be assumed not to be rule-governed. (Cf data 12, 13.)

There are various reasons for proposing to deal with aspects of structure in this way. Such a mechanism is very general (probably too general as I have formulated it, since various tighter constraints would have to be specified). It allows underlying 2-part exchanges to be retained as an explanatory concept. And such structures seem to be a formal feature of certain discourse types as opposed to others. For example, one finds in classroom discourse that a sequence (teacher)Q - (pupils)AAA ... can be followed by a teacher complaint. Thus:

(Sinclair et al 1972:147)

T	what material would you - make for a cake	Q
P	flour	A
T	what else would you use though	Q
P	icing	A
P	icing	A
T	can't hear you if you shout out	complaint

The teacher might let such repetition pass. But it is not open to a speaker in a meeting to comment on such behaviour, i.e. one could not have a sequence such as:

Q A A A A - "don't all answer at once".

4.2. Side and insertion sequences

Jefferson (1972) and Schegloff (1972) have proposed similar concepts of side sequences and insertion sequences. Side sequences constitute a break in an on-going conversational sequence, but are heard as somehow relevant and therefore not as terminating the on-going sequence which is expected to resume after the side sequence. An example of side sequence would therefore be a sequence intended to clear up a misunderstanding or to correct a mistake. (I take it that Jefferson would analyse the correction-apology sequence above, on p.11 as a side sequence.) Insertion sequences are also defined as sequences which break into the on-going sequence whilst maintaining the expectation that the on-going sequence will be resumed and completed. Schegloff deals only with QA sequences inserted into other QA sequences to give the structure $Q_1 Q_2 A_1 A_2$.*

Jefferson and Schegloff thus propose a very general structural feature of conversation (although they do not phrase it in precisely those terms) that certain structural units may be inserted into other structural units without destroying the perceived connectedness

*In a sense it is odd to say that one sequence is "inserted" into another sequence which has not yet occurred. The implication seems to be that the $Q_1 A_1$ structure has occurred, in the sense that the A_1 is strongly expected, and if it does not occur, this will evoke complaints of the type "you didn't answer my question".

of the outside unit. This involves claims about the way in which discourse is analysed by hearers: i.e. not just linearly, but in terms of higher, abstract units, and that such units may be discontinuous. Thus the general type of structure which Jefferson and Schegloff propose is $X(I)Y$, where XY is either an adjacency pair or some other structure, and where I is an inserted sequence, either itself an adjacency pair or other exchange.

Jefferson and Schegloff discuss only a very limited number of types of insertions, and do not attempt to specify constraints on them beyond a general statement that the inserted or side sequence must be heard as "relevant", i.e. as a presequence to the item which resumes the on-going sequence.*

Many types of breaks in on-going sequences occur in the data from meetings. At one extreme, during a committee a side conversation lasting a couple of minutes takes place as an interlude during committee talk (while someone goes to make a telephone call). Identifying "committee talk" from "side conversation" is an issue, since (what I intuitively recognise as) the side conversation is not coterminous with the speaker's absence. Similarly, in a negotiation, members on each side break into short discussions amongst themselves, without leaving the room, and then resume the "negotiation".*

For specific examples of side and insertion sequences, see the examples of data already commented on, on pp.6 and 11 above, and also data 1, 9 and 16.

5. A Q(I)A SEQUENCE

I want now to discuss a more complicated piece of data which (I will argue) has the structure $Q(I)A$, where the inserted sequence I consists of 15 utterances and several exchanges. The data are on the following page.

*For a related problem of recognising talk amongst all participants as not the talk belonging to the speech event for which they are assembled, see Turner 1972, where he analyses such sequences as those beginning "before we start ...". Or consider simply how "asides" are recognised as not requiring responses, and therefore as not a structural part of on-going talk.)

Ch question we put to you is
do you agree with the unanimous view of the rest
of us (1)

Bill hmhmhm ((laughs)) (2)

Ch he sees the joke (3)

Roger he daren't turn round (4)

Bill what are the
what are the s senior specification [clerks (5)

Ch [I'm sorry I -
[don't mean to - I don't really - (6)

Dave [well - () (7)

Ch [I don't mean to pressurise you (8)

Dave [you can say they're coming through as ((plant name))
six (9)

Ch we have discussed this that's what I'm saying (10)

Bill they're grade six (11)

Dave well - they're b l n grading you see Bill (12)

Bill yeah (13)

Dave [which is about (14)

Bill [which is equiv - they equate to grade six weekly
do they (15)

Dave yeah (16)

Bill well there in't any ruddy option then is there (17)

((laughter)) (18)

Ch you're hap . seriously you're [happy with with six (19)

Bill [yeah all right ()
okay (20)

Ch okay the panel ratify this (21)

One way of understanding this fragment in commonsense terms is to say that at (1) Ch asks a question (addressed specifically to Bill, as the previous context makes clear), and that Bill finally answers it at (17). In the intervening exchanges, Bill shows that he sees the joke (2-4), checks on some items of information in preparation to answering the question (5,7,9; 11-13; 15-16), and Ch apologises for putting pressure on Bill (6,8,10). Participants appear to take (17) as some kind of conclusion to the sequence, since (17) is followed by laughter and by Ch checking on whether Bill is "happy" with the decision.

I want to concentrate on the pair of utterances (1) and (17) and discuss a few points involved in the claim that they form a coherent QA pair; i.e. suppose hearers do hear (17) as an answer to (1), then what sort of analysis and operations would this involve?

Note one point that I take to be crucial in such analyses. The issue of what some particular utterance or sequence of utterances "actually" or "really" means (to participants or researcher) is unanswerable and irrelevant. Alternative interpretations may occur to the reader.* But the research task is to justify one possible (set of) interpretation(s), i.e. to explain the kind of underlying structural mechanisms and social knowledge which could lead participants to make sense of the talk in presumably replicable ways. To say that "other interpretations are always possible" is in no way to be apologetic, modest or hesitant about the analysis. But to claim that the interpretation proposed is proved as one possible or appropriate interpretation.

Something of the complexity of the fragment can be seen by setting it out as on the following page. The labels are for identification only: I do not wish to attach particular importance to them, except, of course, to "question" and "answer". It can be seen that hearers have to deal with overlapping items, interrupted items, and (if my analysis is correct) with discontinuous items.

*And I would be seriously interested to have readers propose alternative interpretations to me.

Ch	(1)	{question	
Bill	(2)	{laugh	
Ch	(3)	{comment	
Roger	(4)	{comment	
Bill	(5)	{request for information	
Ch	(6)	{answer//	{apology
Dave	(7)	{answer	{apology
Ch	(8)	{request for confirmation	{apology
Dave	(9)	{answer	
Ch	(10)	{accept	
Bill	(11)	{X//	
Dave	(12)	{request for confirmation	
Bill	(13)	{answer	
Dave	(14)	{laugh	
Bill	(15)	{request for confirmation	
Dave	(16)	{answer	
Bill	(17)	{answer	
	(18)	{laughter	
Ch	(19)	{request for confirmation	
Bill	(20)	{answer	
Ch	(21)	{closes item	

Where // denotes interrupted item, and where brackets and lines across the page denote exchange boundaries. The diagram ignores overlaps.

A possible objection to a structure such as $Q(X \dots)A$ is that the inserted sequence has in some way changed the conversational world, so that the answer cannot simply pick up where the question left off. Thus one can have an adjacent QA pair:

Q: do you agree
A: yes

But one cannot have just "yes" as item (17) in the present data. In general one does not find short form answers ("yes", "no", "maybe") if the answer is separated from the question. This means, for example, that in the present data we do not hear Bill's "yeah" at (13) as an answer to (1). Routinely then the speaker takes account of the talk between question and answer by marking the answer in some way, by what we can call disjunction marking (DM). So we can propose an obligatory transformational rule of the form:

$Q(I)A \rightarrow Q(I)(A + DM).$

For the present data, my intuition would allow as an adjacent QA pair:

Q: do you agree with the unanimous view of the rest of us

A: (well) there in't any ruddy option (is there)

i.e. A can include either both or neither well or is there.

But not:

Q: do you agree with the unanimous view of the rest of us

A: (well) there in't any ruddy option then (is there)

"Then" appears to act as a disjunction marker. An alternative realisation might be "in that case". Although "well" and a tag question may typically co-occur with such disjunction markers, they are not restricted to occurrence in disjoined items. Another form of disjunction marking is a long form answer: as I proposed above, short form answers cannot be used if the answer is separated from its question. (For another example of then as a disjunction marker, see data 16).*

Note that the issue of whether (17) is an "answer" to (1) is however yet more complex than I have discussed. First, the surface form of (17) is itself a (tag) question, although I proposed above that the tag is optional. Second, (17) is "not really" an answer at all. An unproblematic answer to (1) would be some equivalent of "yes okay I agree". But what (17) logically is, is a reason why Bill would answer "yes". The "yes" has to be inferred, and Ch asks for confirmation of it at (19). Reasons are frequently substituted for answers. Thus one gets exchanges like (hypothetical example):

A: are you coming

B: I gotta work

where B's response could be analysed as standing for an underlying deleted answer "no because I gotta work". So we can propose a rule that an answer may be substituted by a reason for that answer.

We can now propose some fairly precise rules for generating QA exchanges as follows. (I will assume that requests for information and confirmation are types of questions.)

*We need discussion of the use of the analyst's intuition in discourse analysis. It probably has its uses, but grammatical and discourse analysis do not appear to be entirely analogous here. Many patterns have been shown in tape-recorded conversation which would not have occurred to the linguist working solely with his intuition. This is an almost entirely unexplored area. Can there, for example, be elicitation experiments in discourse analysis?

exchange	-	QA	
QA	-	QAQA	, according to chain rule
QA	-	QIA	, where I is an exchange*
I	->	I + I	
A	-	reason for A	
[A reason for A]	-	[A reason for A]	+ DM , in context after I

All the rules are optional except the last one.

This set of rules will of course merely generate some "correct" sequences (and will not generate all the structure of the data fragment). But it happens that speakers do not always answer questions, and one finds sequences like:

A: Q
 B: \emptyset
 A: you didn't answer my question

i.e. rules of conversation do get broken and speakers then have routine ways of remedying the situation. Again this is a point at which the analogy between discourse and grammatical analysis becomes hazy. Grammar does not have to build in rules governing what happens when grammatical rules get broken. It is of course trivially easy to propose an additional optional transformational rule such as

QA -> Q + \emptyset + complaint.

But it is now slightly odd to say that the transformed sequence is still "grammatical" discourse, since the complaint recognises the broken rule and tries to remedy it.

Usually then it is easy to find answers: they arrive just after questions. The claim that an answer may come 15 utterances after its question involves the claim that placement is not the only criterion by which answers are recognised. Answers may also be recognised (when separated from their question) by (a) well in

*For the present I am not concerned with a closer specification of constraints on I. But note a couple of points relevant to the problem. As I discuss below in section 6, requests for clarification are relatively context free in their possibilities of placement after other acts and moves. This is true of many types of remark which refer back to the discourse itself. They create their own topical relevance by using talk as a resource for comment. Note also that wherever laughter occurs, it will be heard as tied to the last utterance, unless that is it fails to occur immediately after an item otherwise marked as a joke. And in this case, its lateness will typically be noted by a remark like "have you just got it?"

initial position in the utterance; (b) by disjunction marking, such as "then"; (c) by answer substitutes such as "I suppose so"; and (d) by analysing the intervening sequence into completed exchanges, which I have not dealt with here except by proposing one possible exchange structure.

The justifications for proposing a Q(I)A structure for the data are that: (a) this structure maintains the QA pair as a basic organisational unit, i.e. there is no need to propose a new structure to deal with the data; and (b) this structure explains the coherence of the data. If self-embeddings (insertions) are not permitted as a construct, then it is much more difficult to account for the perceived coherence of the fragment, and one still has the problem of specifying sequencing (which is the same problem as specifying constraints on embeddings).*

The point of the analysis of this fragment has been to illustrate types of structural complexity which have not been found in our analyses of teacher-pupil and doctor-patient talk. One implication is that such types of structural complexity are themselves characteristic of certain discourse types (just as certain types of syntactic complexity are characteristic of, say, legal language).

*Chomsky's argument against grammars based on "left-to-right" derivation is that they cannot deal with self-embedding. I.e. languages allow sentences such as: (i) if S1 then S2; (ii) either S3 or S4; (iii) if (i) then S2, etc. Thus languages allow sentences such as a + S + b where there is a dependency between a and b (Chomsky 1957: 22). Now it is possible to specify dependency relations back over several items. But for the present conversational data, it would be necessary to specify dependencies stretching back over 15 items, resulting in an inordinately complex and unrevealing model. It is simpler and more elegant to allow the structure to be generated by transformational rules, which can introduce embeddings and therefore discontinuous items. The structure as I proposed it informally above on p.17 is, ignoring overlapping exchanges:

Q'(S QA Ap QAAc QA)A' QA,

where S = side sequence, Ap = apology, Ac = accept, and requests for information and confirmation are taken as types of question.

6. CONSTRAINTS ON PLACEMENT OF UTTERANCES

So far, I have discussed various underlying structures which I think certain types of conversation can be shown to have. I have proposed structures such as:

$$XI \quad - \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} XXY \\ XYY \\ X(I)(Y + DM) \end{array} \right\}$$

If talk can be shown to be generated from (or mapped onto) such structures, and of course from basic structures such as QA and IRF, then this partly accounts for the coherence which talk is heard to have, i.e. coherence is accounted for at the level of underlying acts, moves and exchanges.

But in investigating structural sequences of acts and moves, it is important to remember that certain items are much freer in their possibilities of placement than others. For example, loops (e.g. "pardon" or "you what?") or requests for clarification are not restricted to particular slots in sequences of acts, i.e. items like "pardon" or "what do you mean?" are not sequentially ordered relative to underlying acts or moves. They may for example be tied uniquely to items in the surface structure, such as particular words. There are clear constraints on the occurrence of, say, requests for clarification within certain speech events as opposed to others; i.e. too many requests for clarification are inappropriate in casual conversation.* But within a speech event it is impossible to specify structural constraints on their occurrence.

Consider also such conversational items as "yeah" and "mmhm" which are used (among other functions) to confirm continued auditory presence or agreement. Their position of occurrence is likely to be constrained by phonological or rhythmical factors (although this has nowhere been studied, as far as I know), but not by the sequential order of acts.

For another type of act which is relatively free in its placement possibilities, consider these two pieces of data:

*See Stubbs 1972 for a general rule specifying such a conversational constraint on "metacomments" in general. Such items appear to be constrained by probability rather than by structural considerations.

(C2.312)

Roger what code number are we giving this one em
Ch yes it was sort of
Dave I dunno

(C2.325)

S I saw Joan yesterday and she was up in arms
? ((laughs))
? I know yeah

The arrowed items endorse, back up, add weight to, accept into the conversation, approve, uphold, chime in with, echo, etc. something that another speaker has said. They might be translated (if one approves of "translating" such items) as "I might have said that if I'd thought of it" or "I wish to be associated with that utterance". In fact, a near functional equivalent in the data is "I was going to say" (See data 8, and cf 6, 7). Such items have a purely conversational meaning.* Other items which could act thus as endorsements are "yeah that's a point", "that's true", "mm", "yeah" (probably with tone 1 and mid key). Another common realisation as in the first fragment above is to begin a sentence (sometimes picking up the syntax from the endorsed utterance) but to leave an incomplete sentence.** *** Such items appear to characterise relatively informal talk; they characterise the committee data rather than the negotiating data.

6.1. Misplacement prefaces

Consider now a class of conversational items which Schegloff and Sacks (1973) call "misplacement markers". They give as an example "by the way ...", and point out that such items are used to mark utterances which occur out of sequence. More precisely, misplacement markers indicate to hearers that they should not use placement in sequence to analyse the "point" of the following utterance. Studying

*An important topic which needs full discussion is that certain acts (e.g. loops) are almost purely conversational in function. Cf other items with a purely conversational function: "you know", "I mean". Whilst other acts can equally occur in written language, e.g. threats, questions, frames, etc.

**These are then interesting items from this point of view as well: they may be intentionally incomplete as far as linguistic form goes.

***It may prove possible to analyse such "endorsements" as a display of one speaker's "orientation" to another. See WPDA 4.

such structural markers thus provides a fairly direct way of studying an aspect of how people listen to each other, and the kinds of abstract structures they listen for. By definition then, misplacement markers, and misplacement prefaces which I discuss below, are acts whose position, and whose perceived connectedness to preceding talk, cannot be explained by a structural analysis which chains utterances only act by act and move by move.

Such items indicate how speakers themselves are continually analysing the underlying structure of talk, and that they may be obliged to provide an account if they wish to produce an utterance out of sequence. This account may typically follow a common pattern. For the present data, if speakers are going to contribute an utterance which is "out of place" in some way, they typically preface it with elaborate items such as:

"just one other comment John - em - you asked me just now what ..."

"can I . I must just say that .^v I think that ..."

"Bill - y'know this other information ..."

(See data 2, 12, 14 for the context of these items.)

It is possible to specify more closely the form of such prefaces. For the present data, the full form of a misplacement preface is:

1	2	3	4	5	6
(term of address)	(mitigation)	(justif- ication)	(placement marker)	(self-referential metastatement)	(metareference to others' talk)

This formula is to be read as follows. Such prefaces (in a full form) occur only in relatively formal speech events. All items* are optional, but several typically co-occur. The order of items is not fixed, and it will be clear that they are not entirely discrete. Items are numbered simply for easy reference to examples below. I will give some examples from the data and then comment briefly on

*We need discussion here of the status of these bracketed items. For the present they can be regarded as dummy labels or assembly items within the preface which seems to be at the level of act. The status of such prefaces as acts or moves also requires discussion. Given that they are not linked to the sequential act/move structure, it may be best to regard them as a type of modifier which occurs before the head item of the sequence they introduce: they are presequences. But note their general function as boundary markers.

the items in the preface.

² think ³ it would be ⁴ useful ² first of all ⁵ just to recap: em ...

⁴ at this point ² I think ³ it's worthwhile ⁵ em stressing ...

² I think ⁶ this has been ⁴ said to you ⁴ before ...

² I think ² bef - ³ time is ⁵ probably ⁶ appropriate ⁶ at this point ... ⁶ if I ⁶ could have a chart put up and ⁶ go through ⁶ your proposal ...

² well ⁵ do you think ⁵ I could ⁵ clarify the situation as we see it ...

³ and ² the thing is ⁵ that - as you ² pro . to ⁵ just ⁵ give you a little bit ⁵ of history as you know ((plant name)) used to be ...

Conversationalists have many ways of expressing mitigation, politeness and tentativeness. One way is to preface remarks with "I think", which has conversational functions quite distinct from its literal meaning. Its function as a politeness marker can be shown for the present data by its tendency to co-occur with other potential markers of mitigation as listed below, and by its frequent use in introducing summaries of what other speakers have said*; of a chairman opening a negotiation by saying, in reference to the previous discussion: "I think you raised a number of points Ron". On a literal reading, this is an absurd, even insulting statement: but it is not, of course, heard literally.

Another means of mitigation is "just". This is a tricky item with many uses in conversation which it does not have in written English. A main use seems to be as a softener or mitigator. It is used in this function by teachers to soften commands: as in "could you just get your books out".

Other markers of tentativeness which occur frequently in the

*These claims will need to be documented in detail, partly from monologue data, where "I think" tends to co-occur with boundary (i.e. paragraph) markers. As another example of "I think" as a marker of mitigation, I was caught recently saying "I think this is quite definitely ...".

data are: repetitions, aspiration, and silent stresses. (On the function of silent stress as a "pseudo-hesitation" see Abercrombie 1971.) These markers are particularly problematic as they all clearly have other functions individually: Abercrombie lists three other functions of silent stress; repetitions (but typically of initial syllables only) are also used to mark interruption prefaces (see below); and aspiration co-occurs with boundary markers in general. Again the interpretation of these features becomes less problematic when they co-occur with lexical markers of tentativeness. This is an example of a very general problem for discourse analysis, that it is rare to find unambiguous cues of, say, acts or boundaries. But certain features can be specified which tend to co-occur. (Cf one view of the phoneme which defines it in terms of clusters of features.)

Note that the interpretation of these features is also problematic insofar as their use is partly idiosyncratic and a mannerism in the talk of the particular speakers I have studied. This does not mean however that hearers cannot systematically attribute meaning to an idiosyncratic feature of speech, but only that such features are an optional feature of misplacement prefaces in general.

I am using the term justification to refer to items with which the speaker indicates that it would be worthwhile or useful or appropriate or relevant to contribute this utterance. These items show speakers accounting for their own talk: why this utterance? In claiming relevance for their talk, speakers may therefore get the floor until the relevance of their contribution becomes clear.

I am using the term placement marker to refer to ways in which a speaker indicates how an utterance is to be understood as occupying a particular place in a sequence of talk (the point about misplacement prefaces being that they do not follow "naturally" or predictably from the immediately preceding utterance). The most obvious examples here are list terms, e.g. "first of all", "secondly". But the term can also be extended to ways of indicating how a whole stretch of talk is to be analysed in terms of sequential order, e.g. "you asked me just now".

By self-referential metastatements, I mean terms by which the speaker gives a metalinguistic gloss on what he is about to say, e.g. "can I explain ...". There is a large class of metaterms used here, such as "say", "suggest", "explain", "run through", etc.

Such items give an initial characterisation of the utterance, and therefore tell hearers how to listen to it (in the absence of a context provided by the previous utterance). The term *metareferences to others'* talk should be clear in comparison.

6.2. Summary

I have spent some time discussing such prefaces for several reasons. (a) They are an important class of items in the data. (b) They are one device by which speakers display their own analyses of conversational structure. (c) They indicate points in the talk at which, by speakers' own accounts, we cannot explain the coherence of the talk by positing tying mechanisms which operate between adjacent acts or moves. (d) Misplacement prefaces are one of a group of (sometimes elaborate) such prefaces now identified in conversational data, including: story prefaces (Sacks 1967); joke prefaces (Sacks 1972); point of view prefaces (e.g. "from a union point of view"); and other *presequences* including preclosings (e.g. "we:ll", Schegloff & Sacks 1973), and preinvitations (e.g. "doing anything tonight?", Sacks 1967). (e) Even more generally they are one of a large number of devices by which speakers indicate what they are doing with an utterance and how hearers should treat it.

7. ON HEARING A CHALLENGE

Reformulating my point from section 2, I take it that discourse ^{analysis} should have at least three related aims: to discover general organising devices which provide for the coherence of any multi-party talk; to discover what organising devices are characteristic of particular discourse types; and to provide methods of analysing specific tape-

*A topic for further study here is that the concept of "misplaced" utterances bears closely on the problem of "interruptions", which are an almost entirely unstudied feature of conversation. A commonsense meaning of "interruption" is precisely that it is out of place. One way to regard interruptions is to see them as a turn-taking mechanism in a speech situation in which turn-taking is not controlled by a recursive system of exchanges or by explicit invitations to speak (see above). What constitutes an interruption turns on a complex constellation of factors including the perceived relevance of the interrupting utterance and the status of the interruptor. But it is not surprising that, in formal situations, many utterances which we would intuitively recognise as interruptions are prefaced by items which are similar to misplacement prefaces. For the present data, a typical form of interruption preface is: (term of address) + (can I/could I/I must/let me, etc.) + (self referential metastatement).

recorded data.

I want to end this paper by again analysing aspects of the organisation of a specific piece of data. If the types of very general discourse organisation which I have discussed will not allow us to come to grips with specific data, then they may ultimately be of dubious value. The analysis will attempt to account for the coherence of the fragment by using the concepts of side sequence, acts, moves and exchanges, presequence, and an interpretive rule. But it will also introduce a concept not discussed above. I will show that it is possible to account for the coherence of the data only by supposing that utterances may be heard simultaneously as different acts at different levels. The aim in this section is therefore to show (again) that very general and abstract organising devices are required to explain the connectedness of discourse as it unfolds second by second.

As I emphasized above, the point of such analyses is to show the type of operation which hearers might have to perform on talk in order to make sense of it. Such analyses show that hearers' analyses are at least as complex as those set out here. On this general point, we should note that the "real" meaning of what is being said is by no means always transparent to the speakers themselves. The negotiation is a situation in which the speakers are all too aware of the interpretive work which has to go into understanding what the other side are saying. Thus the chairman at one point says,

"what exactly are y: y y you em - asking or or or suggesting here";

i.e. he is having difficulty in identifying the act underlying an utterance. (See data 4 for the context and further development.)

I begin by presenting the data, a fragment from a trade union negotiation. The fragment is from near the beginning of the negotiation. The chairman has been talking for several minutes, summarising the position reached in the previous discussion and what management are now prepared to offer. The fragment is therefore taken from an intuitively important moment in the discussion: the point where the trade union spokesman breaks in for the first time and takes the floor with a long monologue of his own.

In case any of my readers are not convinced that there is anything to explain here, I start with a couple of comments on the lack of connectedness which this fragment shows at surface level. Why does M1 suppose at (12) that T1 might want the contract to be dropped? T1 has not said so in so many words. How did M1 interpret him as having "meant" this? Why does M1 "not answer" T1's question (6)? Why does T1 interrupt M1 at (13) when M1 appears to be about to make an offer? I will not answer all of these questions fully, but pose them to point out that such questions could not be answered without supposing an underlying structure at least as complex as the one I propose. One could suppose, of course, that M1 knew that T1 "really" meant that he wanted the contract dropped through previous discussions and through what he knew of the trade union position. But this would not solve the problem of how M1 took these utterances as expressing this position.

It is not possible to make my points by a single "sweep" through the data, since a feature of this fragment is that the interpretation of earlier utterances is confirmed and denied by later utterances, especially the interpretation of (6).

(6) T1 you mean that

This is intonationally marked as an interrogative, so, at one level, it is heard as a metaquestion or request for clarification. As I have discussed above, such questions are privileged insofar as they are much freer in their possibilities of placement than most questions, i.e. they can logically follow any type of preceding act or move. The present negotiation is, moreover, a speech event in which the speakers are explicitly oriented to "getting things clear". This concern could therefore allow T1 to interrupt M1 when M1 has not finished talking. These observations are sufficient to account for why (6) might occur at this point. I propose below however that (6) is not "merely" a request for clarification: T1 uses (6) and the possibility of placing it here, in order to do another speech act.

(7) M1 ardon

M1 does not answer T1's request, but asks his own metaquestion or loop.

(8) T1 you mean that

This seems to be an unproblematic response to (7) being a repetition of

(6) with the same intonation and key.

(9) T2 you're not having that are you

This is marked by the tag question as an interrogative. It is not a straightforward reformulation of (6) or (8) however, but a gloss on what T2 interprets T1 as meaning. A straightforward expansion of (8) might be "do you mean this contract?" But T2 reformulates an underlying meaning. Note also that we hear (9) as reformulating (8) because of its position in a side sequence, i.e. at one level, a possible structure of (6) to (9) is:

	Mm	xxxxx
(6)		T1 request for clarification
(7)		M1 loop
(8)		T1 repetition
(9)		T2 reformulation

with (7) to (9) constituting a side sequence within a possible side sequence started by (6).

(10) M1 well A again eh - we've no strong ...

well A is ambiguous. It is always a starter or preface of some kind. But it may function either as a frame (i.e. opening a new exchange or transaction) or it may merely preface an answer to a question. (Cf above p.18). This utterance is also marked by again which indicates that (10) is at least the third item in some series, i.e. it marks (10) as a modification of a previous statement by M1 following some intervening talk. Again can therefore allow the hearer (who has analysed M1's previous statement) to infer the gist of M1's present utterance before he completes it: at least it warns the hearer what to expect.*

But our analysis is now in trouble, since, on the one hand, to propose for the present data that well A marks a new beginning would in no way explain the coherence of the fragment. For we still have not found a response for (6). If (6) is "merely" a request for

*Cf such expressions as "okay well look" (M1.298) which can be heard as introducing a compromise statement. And of above on the function of prefaces in general of giving an initial characterisation of the utterance they introduce.

clarification, then we would expect to find M1 saying "yes that's what I mean", or an equivalent. But M1 does not make such a remark, and no-one comments on its absence. On the other hand, if well A marks an answer, what is it an answer to? Can we find any way of interpreting (10) as an acceptable answer to (6)? To do this we have to reanalyse (6) to (10) at a deeper level of underlying acts. The simplest way to present such an alternative analysis is to return to (6) and to propose an interpretive rule which allows us to hear it as something other than a request for clarification.

A recent weekend at an academic conference convinced me that there is an interpretive rule of discourse that:

in academic conferences, questions from the floor following the presentation of a paper, will be heard as challenges to the position the speaker has argued in his presentation; and that the speaker's response to such questions will be heard as attempts to defend his position.

A comparable rule for negotiations seems to be that:

in negotiations, utterances which have the surface form of requests for clarification and are addressed by a speaker on one side to a speaker on the other side, may be heard as challenges to the position just stated.

Note that the formulation "may be" does not necessarily constitute a defect in the formulation of the rule, since one of the points of the present fragment of data is precisely that T1 exploits this ambiguity in his "you mean that" in order both to get into the talk and to challenge at the same time. We can make the formulation stronger however by saying that if a speaker wants to have his request for clarification interpreted at its face value, then he will be likely to use a form other than the straightforward metaquestion, i.e. we have a case of "neutralization" (to use Ervin-Tripp's term).*

*For related comments on the interpretation of utterances as meta-statements, and the interpretation of metastatements as evaluative, e.g. as complaints, snubs, counterattacks, criticisms, etc. see Stubbs 1973. I propose there that there is a general interpretive rule of discourse that many metastatements referring to another speaker's talk are likely to be heard as evaluative in some way. Hearing (6) in the present data as a challenge is a particular instance of this.

Can we now find any local justifications, in the data fragment, for hearing (6) as a challenge? I have already said that (9) reformulates an underlying meaning of (6) or (8). The literal meaning of (9) ("you're not having that are you?") is at least not incompatible with supposing (6) to be a challenge, and is direct evidence that T2 takes (6) to be "not merely" a request for clarification. M1's "pardon" was previously glossed as a loop. But "pardon" is often used when the speaker could, if pressed, repeat what was said: it is often used as a conversational time-gainer. The best local evidence probably comes in (12) where M1 formulates what T1 might "want". T1 has nowhere said what he wants, yet M1 provides us with a translation of what he takes T1 to mean. M1 has apparently heard (6), (8) and (9) as a request to "drop the contract": which in the context is a challenge of sorts. Another way of analysing (6), then, is as a prechallenge, i.e. as setting up a potential sequence leading to something like "because if that's what you mean, then we're not having it", which has been deleted in surface structure.

Having led the reader along this far, I must admit that I am not altogether happy with the term "challenge", which seems too dramatic for what is happening in this fragment. On the other hand, the fragment shows how (to use Goffman's 1955 term) "ritual equilibrium" may be maintained, i.e. how a challenge may be brought off and understood and responded to, without ever being expressed in so many words.

The continuation of the fragment is unproblematic in terms of my previous analysis of presequences. (13) opens a new exchange, as marked by the interruption preface of frame plus metastatement, and by a point of view preface (16). T1 can interrupt before M1 has finished, as M1 has already indicated by "again" in (10) the gist of what he is going to say.

We therefore have several local cues that the analyst's interpretation of (6) as a challenge is compatible with the participants' interpretation of the talk in the situation. But these local cues give no indication of how the participants formed their interpretation. To explain this we must assume an interpretive rule of the type I have proposed.

Note also how later utterances have been used to confirm my interpretation of earlier utterances. That is, if we code utterances

into acts and exchanges, as I do below, then earlier codings are retrospectively confirmed or denied by later codings. This is one way in which a "coding", in being a once-for-all, static analysis, reifies precisely this feature of spoken discourse as a process. I prefer to look at such a coding then as representing knowledge of structural features of discourse which speakers themselves draw on in making sense of talk.

- I now summarise some of the above points in a proposed structure for the data fragment. (// indicates interrupted acts. Lines across the page divide off exchanges.)

		surface acts*	underlying acts
M1	so eh . you know this is	offer//	
T1	you mean that	request clarification	challenge
M1	pardon	loop	time-gainer
T1	you mean that	repetition	challenge
T2	you're not having that are you	reformulation	challenge
M1	well A	starter	
	again eh . we've no strong eh - v if you want us to drop ...	offer//	
T1	look look . let me . let me . let me . make it patently clear ...	frame interruption preface	

7.1. Summary

My analysis has centred on the pair of utterances

(6) T1: you mean that

(10) M1: well A again eh . we've no strong - v if you want us to drop
the contract there -

It should be clear that there is no syntactic cohesion or "fit" between (6) and (10). They are not even adjacent utterances in time. But I have shown how the participants might have analysed these utterances (and the intervening side sequence) in a way which constructs

*More precisely, these are probably best analysed as mono-act moves.

their coherence.

8. SUMMARY.

It will be clear that this paper has offered only some related observations on ways in which talk in committees and negotiations is heard as coherent, and that I have not offered a "system" for analysing such talk. I have argued in fact that no single system will account for the perceived coherence of the talk. It will be clear also from a perusal of the data fragments, particularly in the appendix, that the talk is ordered (and complex) in many ways that I have not touched on. In this preliminary paper, I have looked relatively closely at small fragments of data, to show that very general and abstract devices are required to explain the second-by-second development of the talk. Different types of order which I have discussed in varying detail include: sequential ordering of acts and moves, recursive ordering of moves within exchanges, orderly insertions, prefaces, and different levels of underlying acts. I have also deliberately raised many problems for analysis, as well as proposing solutions. One of my specific aims has been to indicate ways in which the present data raises problems for analysis not previously encountered in the teacher-pupil and doctor-patient recordings.

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DATA APPENDIX

(N1.049)

M1 ... I've said that we've looked our training schemes we've really as a result of this meeting . em . developed . another type of - training scheme which'll . run . in addition . to: the train the training schemes which we had . at the moment . em (4) I think bef - time is probably appropriate 't this point - for me to

T1 [this isn't . the - training - scheme that you youyou (referenced)

M1 [no

T1 that you have at the moment

M1 no . I think (ppropriate stra) ((stutter)) moment . if . I could . have a chart put up . and go through the proposal . our intention in detail now . I've said that we've . em ...

(N1.158)

M1 can I . I must just say . I think that we'll . before we sort of . answer you firmly on this one we have em . we'll have an adjournment i i in a little while . and come back to you on that point but eh -

T1 I wouldn't have thought it should be prove eh an obstacle if we if we if we eh identify the areas - in the first place where we're going to be

M1 [sorry Bill

T1 you know come against one another . I believe you'll get through the . the problem

M1 () Bill you wanted to say something

M4 [yeah you you say ...

(N1.204)

M1 well you know I think what we've said (and) what I've said today show - is proof enough: eh - of what we've done to meet your points here . eh particularly the . specific points that you - made at the last meeting Ron e:m - I think eh - I think this does now - before adjournment does anybody . want to say anything more ((click))

(7) do you want to say anything before we retire for a few -

T1 no: I think: eh - we've got the points

(N1.408)

M1 what exactly are y: y y you em - asking or or [or suggesting here Ron

T2 [well

well what I'm suggesting is that em - when these people are em - offered a job - it's pointed out to them what the appropriate union is

M2 are we talking the eh . the last column ()

...

T1 we're not even talking about areas where there's a bit of disagreement that's been going on for about two years ((laughter))

M1 ^vyes . eh
M2 I shall need a commission if you ()
M1 [I'm not quite sure what you . you're asking
yet 'cause I mean...
...
M1 but () I don't think Ron's asking this point out that
you ca . can't sort of . do arm twisting but ^v I think all
you're saying is point out are you - ['cause
T1 [we - we never said twist
anybody's arm
M1 [no I mean Bill was hhh ((laugh)) worried

5) (M1.632)
M1 so what we're saying is that e . e . we're suggesting is that
e t one would be the - 'f you like the training rate

6) (C1.002)
Roger I think it's a nine
Dave yes I think so too because it's more than just ...

7) (C1.006)
Dave yeah but - will this job get involved in () at all -
because of the reported virtual (path) through to
((product name)) (2)
Bill yeah 'cos there's a bi - there's a () coming up - the same
sort of thing

8) (C1.095)
Dave have you looked at this organisation chart ()
? looks a bit
? e:m
Bill I was going to say it looks a bit heavy doesn't it
S [the reason
Bill it's looks a bit wierd to me

9) (C1.052)
Ch ((click))^v well . eh - marketing coordinator - that one we can
do now
? [()
Ch [we're still on job
Dave didn't you leave the ((plant name)) ones before you left
Roger ()
S yeah but it's - going to stay for - for lunch then we can get
() ring ((plant name)) up
Bill [yeah
Ch we'll have to do the ((plant name)) ones afterwards, eh
S [eh - well
lunch is quarter past one
Ch yes . lunch is quarter past one -
S now this is what . a job more or less ...

(C2.001)

Bill whereas the production controller certainly

Roger [these are the other way round and the . the chap on grade nine - A level . degree . desirable etcetera 'n then you look at the one they've recommended for ten

Ch that's a good point Roger

Roger not very much there at all

Ch you're quite right yes if you're judging by skills alone it would . grade would be reversed - well ((creek)) - it seems that the ((creek)) [- majority consensus

Bill [() hoho god v ho hoho [(grade)

Ch [how about

Roger you haven't got them both graded on the wrong one have you

Bill [((into uncontrollable laughter now))

yeah I reckon they're [()

Roger [swapped over the back pages

Ch well how about let the . say . putting it . k . as nine and if they don't like it they eh

Bill they'll [squeak

Ch [know what they can do

Dave Bill . you know this other information may be called upon to represent . company at courts of law to testify the origin of ((product name)) vehicles for identification purposes

Bill yeah

Dave that rings a bell I mean [when he says that

Roger [yes that came up [()

Harold [it came up

at ((plant name)) didn't it

? yes

Bill we have we've got one that does that yeah . but he's

Dave the preproduction controller

S the bloke's in charge of production

Ch [well they're production controllers

Bill [no he was an offshoot from something

S this was the guy [who was something

Roger [he was the chap who was almost ent fulltime on his own wasn't he

Bill yeah he's an offshoot [()

Roger [someone in sales wasn't it

? yeah

? mm

Bill yeah well

Harold [()

Bill [he had a mixture between sales . and the production control the identification of parts [and

? [mm

Dave which () was this I can't remember

S this was the guy . (Sandy)

Bill Dalton used to do it I can't remember the man who does it now . em

Roger just one other comment . John eh you asked me just now what a similar chap at . ((plant name)) would have been - I said ten . but then looking at this chap's . eh people responsible to him there's this vehicle scheduling section leader . and it was that chap - that I was thinking of

Ch oh I see - anyway we've made a decision here and the decision of

the () panel is that we eh reduce the disagree with the
eh - plant recommendation and we grade this job . grade nine -
finito

S eh can (I say) that I can put on the thing - what the areas in
which we grade it as not - ()

Dave skills and experience
(9)

S ()

Ch fact that it fact that it doesn't is not higher - than the eh
we have doubts that it's higher than the other job we don't see
it - as being . a bigger job than the preproduction controller

Dave basically on a comparison with a a with . preproduction controller
and it might be worthwhile checking the () to find out
how it com compares with

? mm

S okay

Ch right . so next job we . (plan) you want us to leave the planning
department

S yes for the moment

Ch so job eighty two then supervisor - litho room . ((plant name))

Roger just before we go into this one there's one thing which we did
decide some time ago should be put on all job descriptions
that's